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Africa@War Volume 5

ZAMBEZI VALLEY INSURGENCY

Early Rhodesian Bush War Operations

Africa @War SERIES

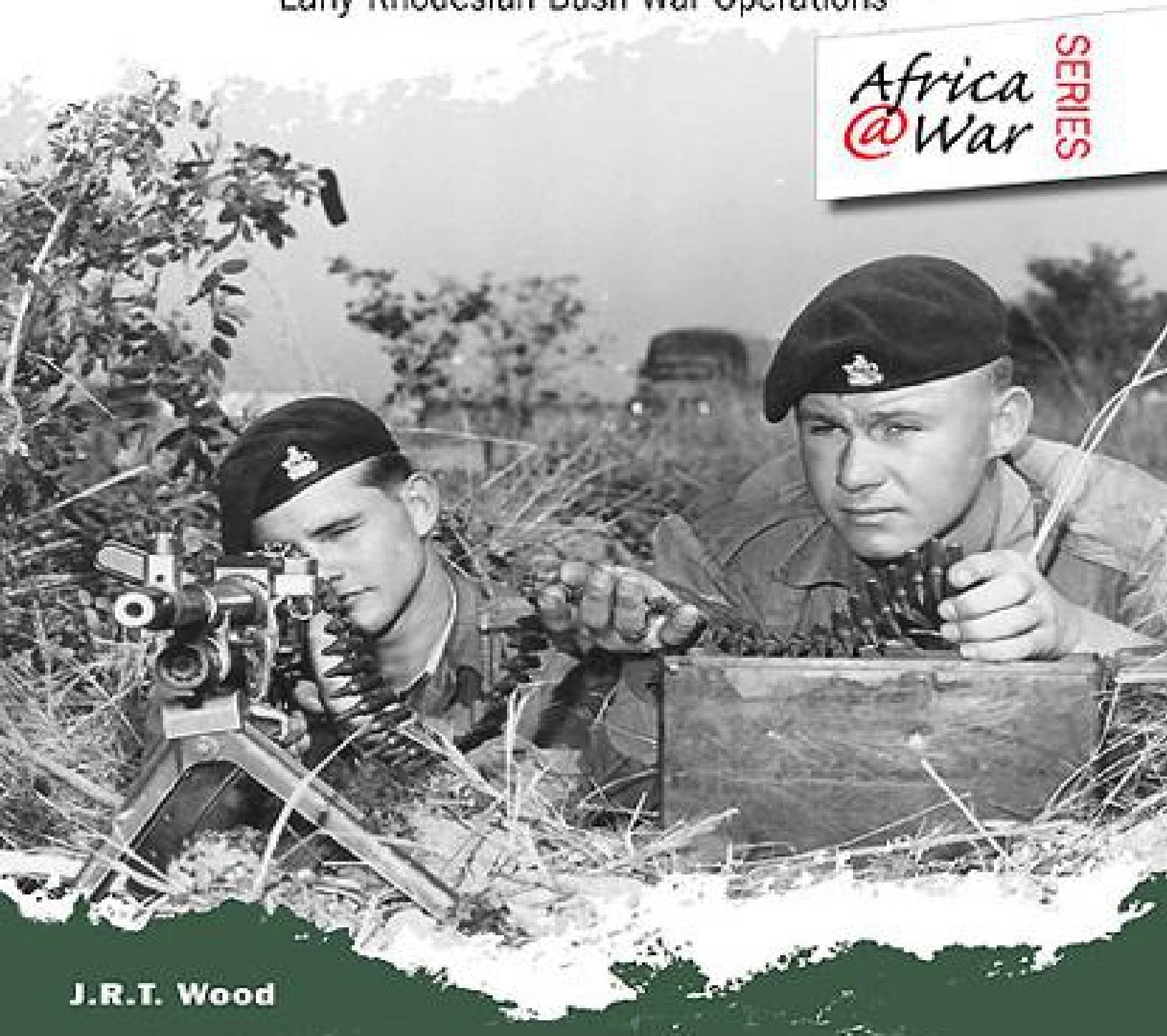

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image1

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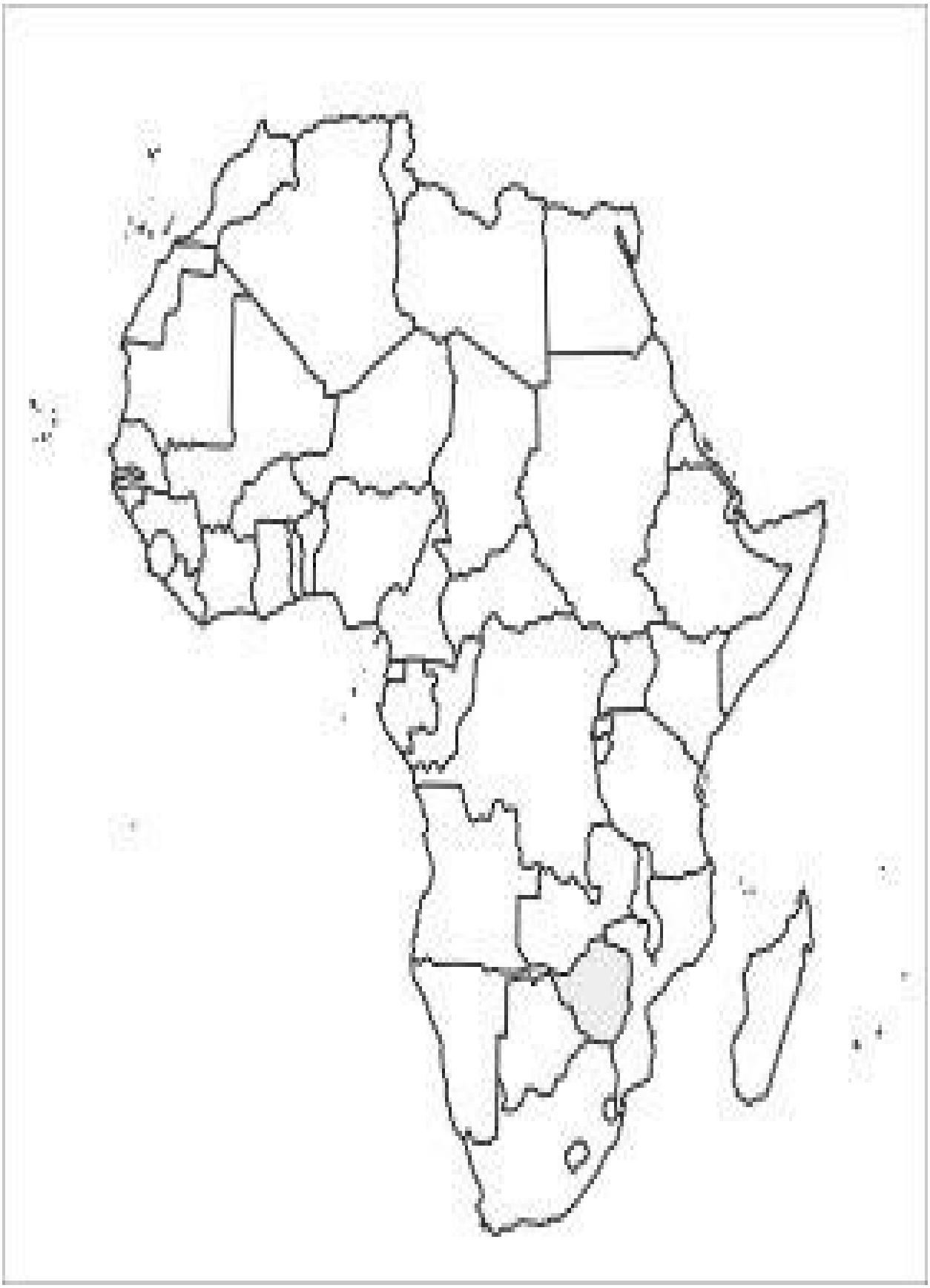

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GLOSSARY

AK-47	Soviet assault rifle
ANC	African National Council
BSAP	British South Africa Police
Coremo	Comite Revolucionario de Moçambique
CT	communist terrorist
FAF	forward airfield
FN	Fabrique Nationale, Belgian arms manufacturer
FPLM	Forças Populares para o Libertaçåo de Moçambique (armed wing of l
frantan	frangible tank napalm bomb
Frelimo	Frente de Libertaçao de Moçambique
MAG	Mitrailleuse d'Appui General, 7.62 × 51mm general-purpose machin
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe (armed wing of the SAANC)
NCO	non-commissioned officer
NDP	National Democratic Party
OP	observation post
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PATU	Police Anti-Terrorist Unit
PRAW	Police Reserve Air Wing
PWO	platoon warrant officer
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAR	Rhodesian African Rifles
RhAF	Rhodesian Air Force
RLI	Rhodesian Light Infantry
RPD	Soviet light machine gun
RPG	Soviet rocket propelled anti-tank grenade
RR	Rhodesia Regiment
RRAF	Royal Rhodesian Air Force
RRR	Royal Rhodesia Regiment
SAANC	South African African National Congress

SAP	South African Police
SAS	Special Air Service
SB	Special Branch
SKS	Soviet self-loading rifle
TTL	Tribal Trust Land
Unita	Uniåo Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People’s Union

PRELUDE:

PREPARING THE GROUND

It has long been practice to date the beginning of the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean armed insurgency, which the African nationalists call the ‘Second Chimurenga’, from 29 April 1966. On that day, the Rhodesian police, the British South Africa Police (BSAP), conducted a joint operation with the Royal Rhodesian Air Force (RRAF) that resulted in the death of seven infiltrators of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU).

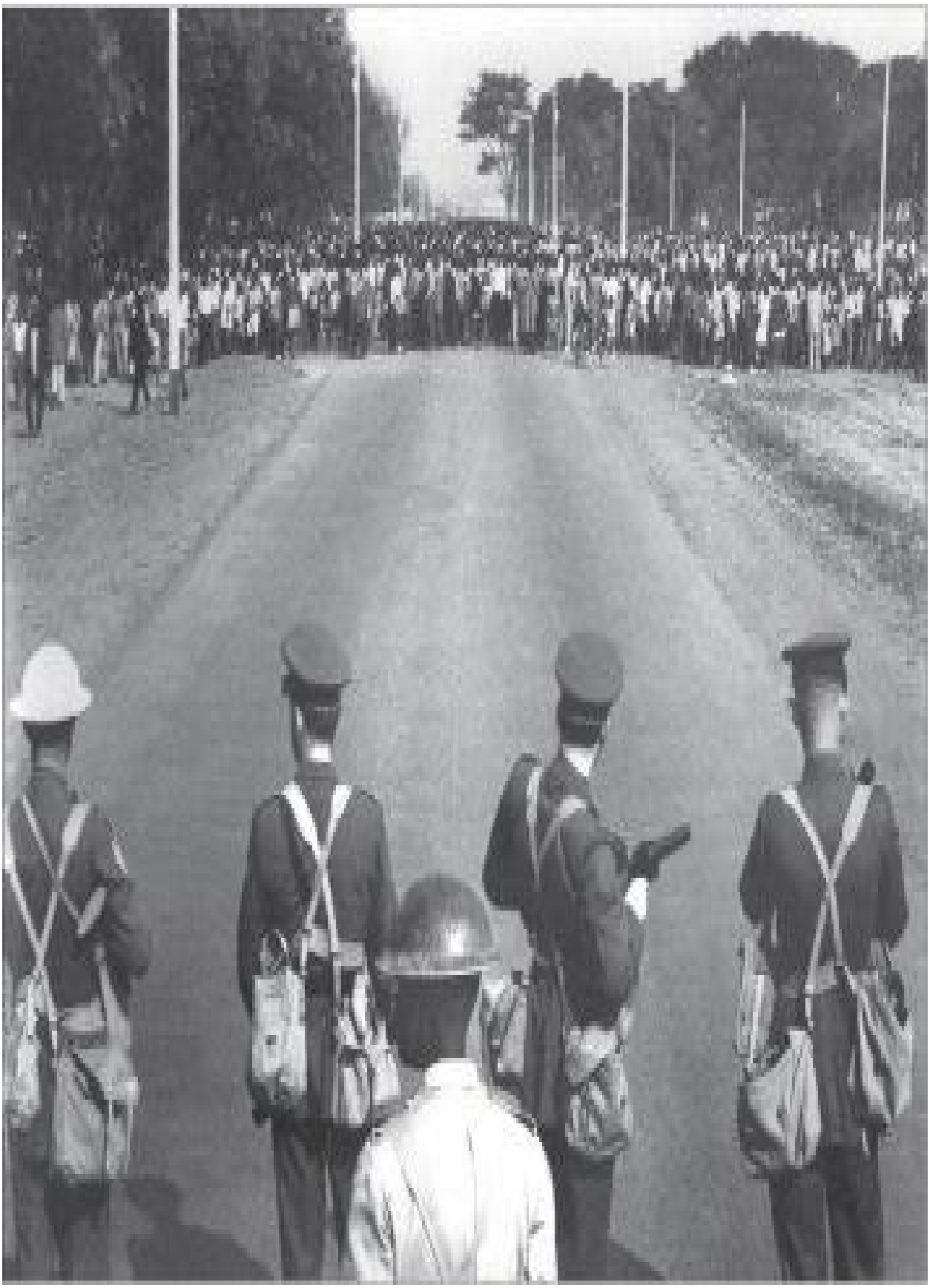
In fact, the insurgency had begun in 1956 when African nationalists, impatient for reform, had generated a night of violence on the streets of Salisbury (now Harare). This was followed by disturbances and intimidation in the African townships throughout the early 1960s. The African nationalists were spurred into action by the sight in the late 1950s of the western powers ridding themselves of their African colonies and dependencies. Only Portugal bucked the trend.

Membership of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland from 1953 did not exempt Southern Rhodesia (as Rhodesia was then known) from the pressure for decolonization. In defiance of the Federal government, the British rapidly advanced Southern Rhodesia’s two federal partners, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi), to majority rule and pressed the self-governing Southern Rhodesians to follow suit. The British could do this because the Federal constitution of 1953 had a fatal flaw that allowed the three constituent territorial governments to retain responsibility for the administration of the affairs of their African populations. As both the northern territories were British protectorates governed directly by Whitehall, the British could destroy the Federation unilaterally, as they did in 1963, by granting the right of secession to the new leaders, Dr Hastings Banda of Nyasaland, and Kenneth Kaunda of Northern Rhodesia.

Southern Rhodesia had been self-governing since 1923 with a non-racial

franchise based on financial and educational qualifications. The franchise by the 1950s, however, had produced only a handful of African voters at a moment when African self-determination was stirring and frustration mounting. Consequently, recognizing that white political domination could not endure indefinitely, the Federal and Southern Rhodesian premiers of the late 1950s, Sir Roy Welensky and Sir Edgar Whitehead, sought to accelerate African acquisition of the vote through economic advancement and education. They also understood that racial segregation laws had to go if African goodwill was to be nurtured, if justice was to be served and if the modern sophisticated state, built by the small white minority, was to survive. Although he began to dismantle the more obvious and petty aspects of segregation, Whitehead did no more than hint at tackling the racial division of the ownership of land, the aspect of Southern Rhodesian legislation most resented by Africans. He knew, however, that his largely white electorate was not ready for such a move and would not hesitate to oust him.

The lack of rapid progress toward their goal of securing total power, in common with their counterparts elsewhere in Africa, drew the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress and its successor, the National Democratic Party (NDP), toward the Marxist concept of revolution and its prescription of the essential ‘armed struggle’. Given the choice of acting or abdicating, the Southern Rhodesian government responded to the intimidation and urban unrest with the declaration of states of emergency and increasingly draconian security laws, bannings and preventive detention.



Tear-gas projectiles at the ready, a police riot squad prepares for confrontation in Harare township, Salisbury, 1963. Photo Blue and Old Gold

The NDP threatened to embark on the ‘armed struggle’ in 1960. Following its banning, the NDP’s successor, the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU), adopted it in 1962 after urban riots, sabotage and countrywide intimidation failed to shake the will of Whitehead’s government. ZAPU sought international support for an armed insurgency. It sent young men abroad for military training in the Communist bloc and in Ghana and Egypt, and began to acquire weapons. On 12 September 1962 ZAPU’s leader, Joshua Nkomo, collected two dozen assault rifles, magazines, ammunition and grenades from the Egyptian government in Cairo. He took them aboard as his declared luggage onto a regular Air France flight to Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika. The aircrew, however, did object to the grenades in his hand luggage and put them in the hold.

Nkomo had flown to Dar es Salaam because Julius Nyerere, the president of Tanganyika (to become Tanzania in 1964), had offered ZAPU sanctuary and training camps for its cadres. Nyerere became a key player thereafter as a ‘front line president’, despite his state being more than a thousand kilometres from Rhodesia’s northern border. Successive British governments until 1980 did nothing regarding Rhodesia without the endorsement of Nyerere.

Nkomo paid another trip to Cairo to collect weapons. Thereafter, a steady supply of war matériel was secured from the Communist bloc and its affiliates. The first of the Egyptian-donated weapons to appear in Southern Rhodesia were, however, British-made. Three Lanchester 9mm sub-machine guns and two Enfield revolvers were found in December 1962 by the BSAP near Shabani (now Zvishavane) in the boot of the car of Tobias Bobbylock Manyonga, a ZAPU regional secretary. Accompanying Manyonga was one of the first young Soviet-trained ZAPU guerrillas. A day later two other ZAPU insurgents were arrested near Victoria Falls with explosives in their car. The arms smuggling continued. The BSAP would find an arms cache in the Rusape area in 1963.

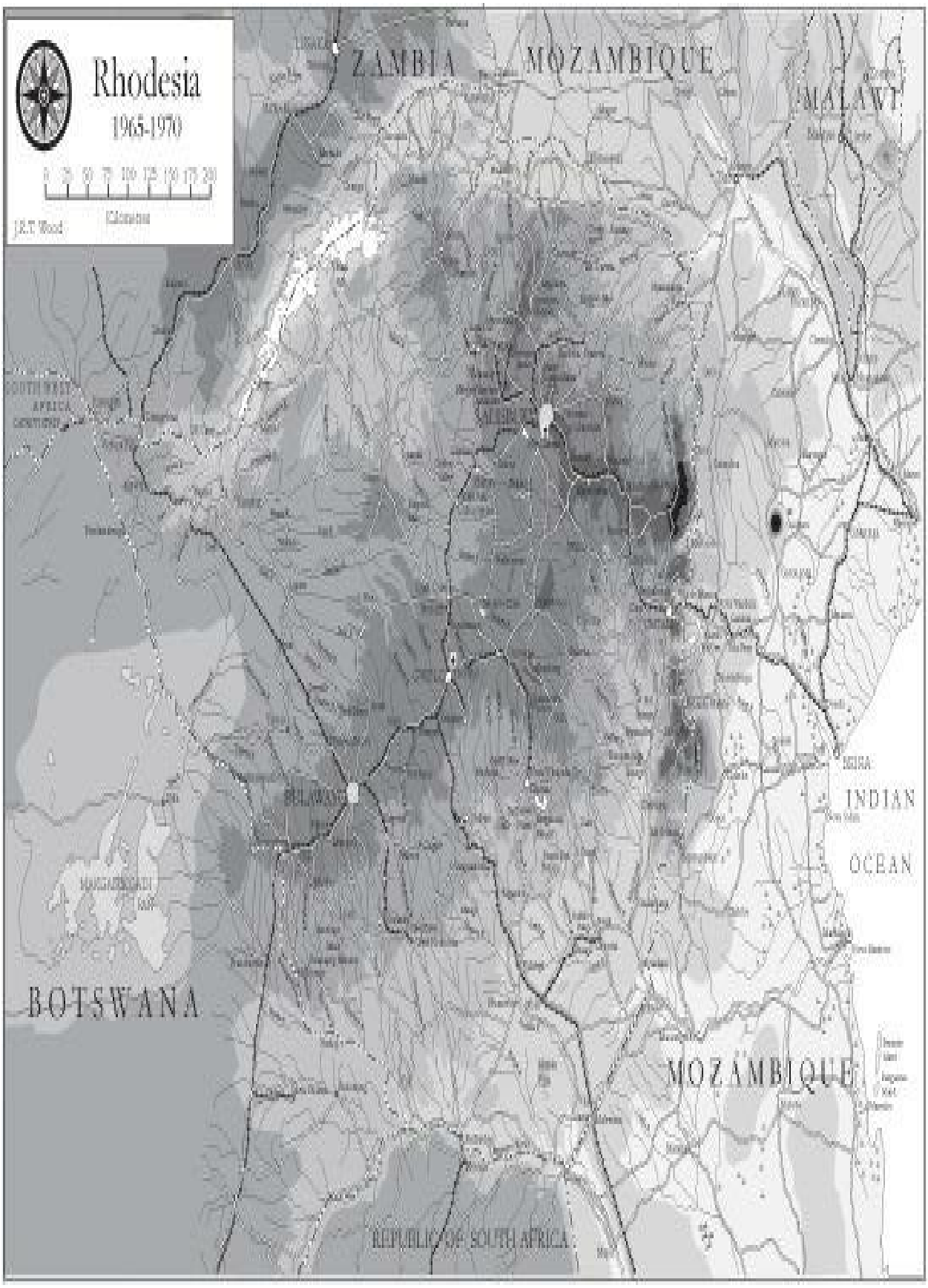
In September 1963 the pressure exerted by the African nationalists was diluted by a schism. Decrying Nkomo's lack of leadership, the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole led a breakaway movement, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU). By then ZAPU and ZANU were faced with a new Southern Rhodesian government. Whitehead and his United Federal Party had been defeated in a general election in late 1962 and were replaced by Winston Field and the right-wing Rhodesian Front. On taking power, Field released a number of activists from preventive detention but was forced almost immediately to combat African nationalist subversion.

The British governor, Sir Humphrey Gibbs, inspects the Rhodesian Light Infantry just prior to UDI in November 1965. He found himself in an invidious position after Rhodesia severed links with the Crown. The officer with the sword is Lieutenant-Colonel Peter Walls, CO 1RLI and later Commander Combined Operations.

The end of the Federation on 31 December 1963 increased the pressure on Rhodesia. The British government urged Field to implement African majority rule and withheld monies due to Rhodesia from the liquidation of Federal assets. Consequently the Rhodesian financial situation was dire but she did gain the RRAF, except for three C-47 'Dakotas' and two Percival Pembroke transport aircraft given to Zambia. The offer of golden handshakes on the termination of Federal service, however, cost the RRAF so many pilots and technicians that it was forced to sell off surplus aircraft—aircraft which would be sorely missed a few years later.

The Rhodesian army was equally affected by the loss of trained manpower. C Squadron SAS had shrunk to less than 30 men. The white-officered Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR) mustered four companies but the all-white Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI) only two. It meant that something less than 1,000 regular front-line troops were available to defend Rhodesia's 390,757 square kilometres or 150,871 square miles (roughly 1.6 times the size of the United Kingdom and slightly larger than the State of Montana). The territorial regiment, the Royal Rhodesia Regiment (RRR), had lost its two Northern Rhodesian battalions, 3 and 7. Furthermore its reserve battalions, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10, existed mostly on paper and lacked essential equipment including transport. The Rhodesian army was converting to the NATO pattern of small arms and machine guns but still had units armed with the obsolete Lee-Enfield .303 rifles and Bren light machine guns. The conversion was not assisted by the British government and the new Johnson administration in the United States implementing an unofficial arms embargo. Fortunately, South Africa was also adopting NATO weapons and was manufacturing them under licence. The Pretoria Mint made the ammunition, something that Rhodesia never did. Reliance on South Africa ultimately

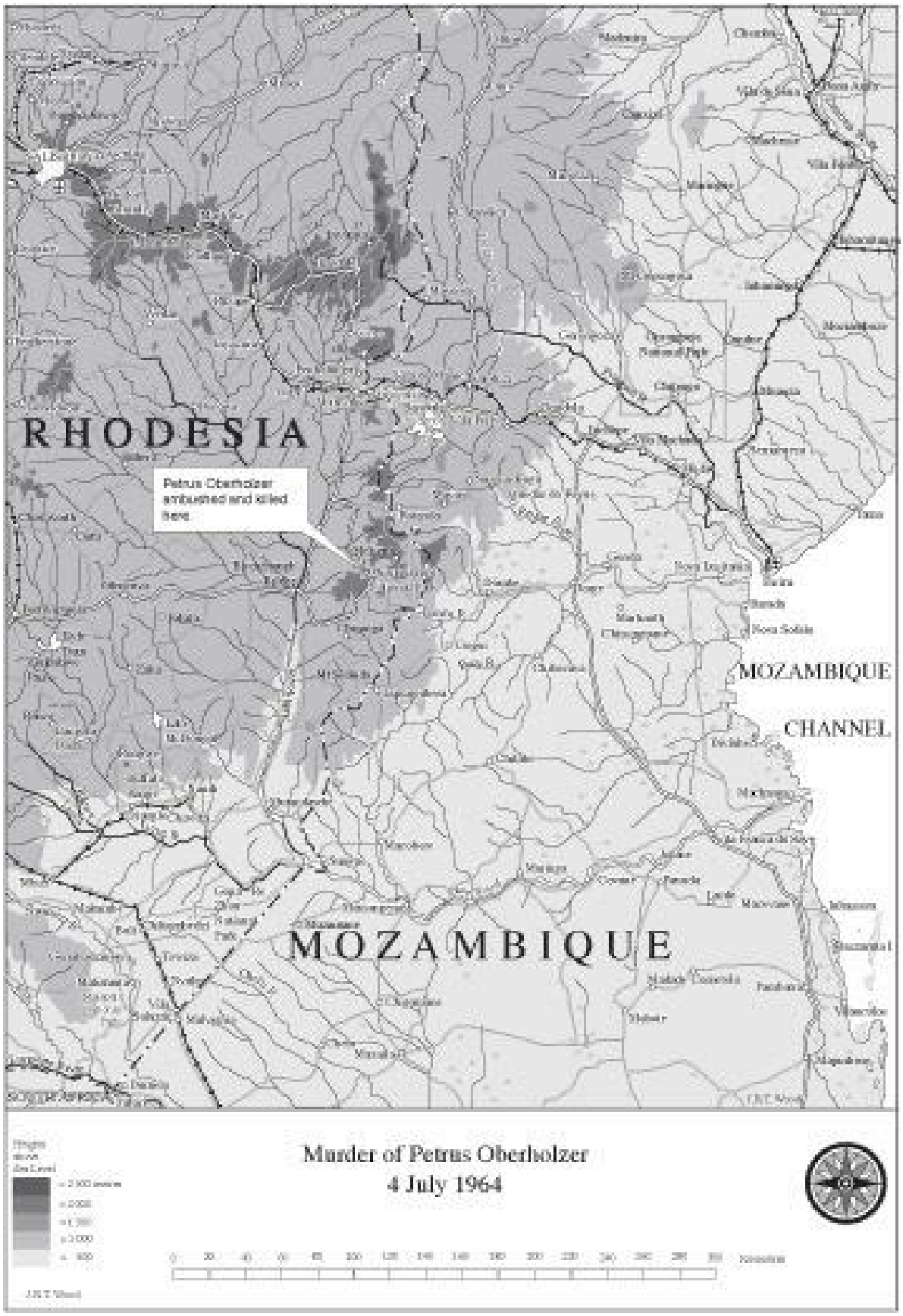
proved to be an Achilles heel in 1976 when the South African prime minister, B.J. Vorster, cut off the supply to force Ian Smith, Field's successor, to accept majority rule.


Rhodesia
1965-1970
J.R.T. Wood
ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE
MALAWI
BULAWAYO
INDIAN
OCEAN
BOTSWANA
MOZAMBIQUE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Rhodesia was finally made more insecure by Zambia offering a safe haven to both ZANU and ZAPU which set up offices in 1964 in Lusaka, Zambia and continued to foster sabotage and other such acts in Rhodesia. ZANU was the first to give the Rhodesians their initial taste of terrorism.

The ZANU five-man, self-styled Crocodile Gang led by William Ndanga (fresh from ZANU's first training course in Ghana) entered Rhodesia by bus in early July 1964. They headed for the Melsetter area (now Chimanimani) in the eastern districts where they lay in ambush on rural roads and petrol-bombed the Nyanyadzi police station.

Success came on Tuesday evening, 21 July, when they attacked the first vehicle, a Kombi, to stop at their roadblock on the main road near the Skyline junction. They stabbed the driver, Petrus Oberholzer (45) when he dismounted to remove the roadblock. A father of seven and an artisan at the Silver Streams wattle factory, Oberholzer, his wife and four-year old daughter were returning from Umtali (now Mutare). Mortally wounded, he tried to drive off but overturned the Kombi. He died in the arms of his wife inside the vehicle while Ndanga and his men attempted to set fire to it. The ambushers fled at the arrival of the next car and evaded the follow-up by police and troops. Victor Mlambo and James Dhlamini escaped over the border into Mozambique only to be tracked down and arrested by Paul Naish of the BSAP the next night, Wednesday, 22 July. They were sentenced to death on 14 December 1964 and, after a considerable international controversy, hanged on 6 March 1968. Ndanga and Master Tresha sought refuge with Sithole, the ZANU president, in Salisbury. Sithole arranged their return to Zambia. Abel Denga (19) the second in command, made his own way back to Zambia. He would command the first ZANU incursion in 1966 with Tresha as one of his group. (Robert Mugabe made the only survivor, Ndanga, a senator after independence in 1980. Ndanga died on Thursday, 29 June 1989 in a vehicle accident.)


RHODESIA
Petrus Oberholzer ambushed and killed here
MOZAMBIQUE CHANNEL
MOZAMBIQUE
Murder of Petrus Oberholzer
4 July 1964

The ZANU apologists, Michael Raeburn and David Martin, have chosen to justify this cowardly murder by claiming Oberholzer was armed when he was not. He was simply heading home after a trip to collect the first photographs he had taken with his first-ever camera. Martin claims: “Ndanga’s action demonstrated to many young nationalists that a man with courage and determination could fight, even without a gun.”[1]

ZAPU armed its first intruders with firearms including an ex-British army Bren gun obtained in Kenya. At dusk on 14 September 1964, led by Moffat Hadebe, a veteran saboteur, the group approached the homestead of Dube ranch near the Shashe river on the Bechuanaland (later Botswana) border south of Kezi. The rancher, Farewell Roberts, a retired magistrate, was not drinking his normal sundowner on the veranda because it was raining. To lure him out, Hadebe’s men knocked on the door. When he and his barking dog responded, they greeted him with a burst of Bren gun fire, riddling the door. Perhaps unnerved by his shout of anger, the attackers dropped the Bren and fled. Three were arrested shortly afterward by the police. Hadebe and the fifth man were tracked for 80 kilometres into the nearby Semukwe Tribal Trust Land by a lone, unarmed BSAP African constable. Finding a beer drink in progress at a kraal (a rural African village), the constable ordered the participants to show him their feet. He arrested Hadebe and his companion upon recognizing that their footwear matched the tracks he had been following. Although he did not resist arrest, the wily Hadebe escaped from custody before he came to trial and would re-emerge in late 1967 in command of the ZAPU incursion on Operation Cauldron.

The internal security situation remained mostly calm due to the preventive detention of leaders and flight abroad of others. In any case, ZAPU and ZANU as yet could only muster a handful of willing recruits and were resorting to press-ganging expatriate Rhodesian Africans in Lusaka and elsewhere in Zambia.

There was no complacency within the Rhodesian security forces as they faced the challenge. They were, however, severely restrained by financial stringency as Rhodesians sought to absorb the loss of the Federation. Among their preparations was an anticipation of the need for joint operations

coordination and for centralized intelligence gathering and appreciation. Winston Field responded by setting up the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) under the directorship of Ken Flower, a deputy commissioner of police. Field also set up the Operations Co-ordinating Committee (OCC), served by the commanders of the Rhodesian army, the RRAF, the BSAP and the CIO director. In January 1965 the army transformed the RLI into a commando battalion with concomitant mobility and special forces' skills. Recruiting had improved but units were still under strength. The exception was the RAR that had managed to raise a fifth company. Rhodesian units never lacked willing African recruits.

It was also a time of greatly increasing tension as Ian Smith, after succeeding Winston Field as prime minister, sought dominion status for Rhodesia. This was something the British Conservative and its successor, Harold Wilson's Labour, government, would not grant without the implementation of 'one man, one vote'. Bearing that in mind, the British stonewalled Smith and should not have been surprised when he issued a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) on 11 November 1965. He did this against the advice of his security forces who were not sure they could continue to function after the sanctions, which the British threatened, denied them spares and other essential war matériel. The RRAF and the British concurred in predicting that vital aircraft would soon be grounded. The Rhodesians also had insufficient stocks of ammunition. This was remedied at the last minute with the South Africans providing a trainload of ammunition. In early 1966 the Rhodesian diplomatic mission in Portugal also managed to procure another trainload of small arms, machine guns and other war matériel.

Facing the inevitability of Smith's UDI, the Rhodesian army drafted Operation Wizard, a defence of Rhodesia against a possible British attempt to put down Smith's rebellion by force. On UDI day, 11 November 1965, troops were deployed to block the entry points across the Zambezi river at Victoria Falls, Kariba and Chirundu but Wizard was never implemented because Wilson had already ruled out the use of force and would not change his mind. His major reason was logistical because Rhodesia's landlocked position made access difficult, particularly because her South African and Portuguese neighbours were unlikely to co-operate. This left the British with only the far-distant port of Dar es Salaam and a gravel road to Zambia. A military

appreciation written by Air Vice-Marshal Peter Fletcher, a former Rhodesian and member of the British Joint Planning Committee, warned that, because the Rhodesian security forces should not be underestimated, two infantry divisions and five tactical fighter squadrons would be required to ensure success. As surprise was essential, the British would have to mount an airborne attack but they lacked sufficient long-range aircraft and the Americans declined to get involved on the excuse that their air transports were totally committed to supporting NATO, South Korea, Vietnam and elsewhere.

All this flattered the Rhodesian forces but Wilson also had a parliamentary majority of four seats and sizeable British popular support for the white Rhodesians. Consequently he took the care to rule out the use of force well before November 1965.

Despite this, on 11 November 1965, the Rhodesian forces manned defensive positions on the three crossing points on the Zambezi river at Victoria Falls, Kariba and Chirundu. After a tense wait in heavy rain, they were stood down. Perhaps because the African nationalist leadership was either detained or abroad, the African population greeted Smith's UDI with little more than muted protest. The enraged Wilson, instead, implemented financial and economic sanctions.

While Rhodesia settled down to learn how to cope with the new situation, the Rhodesian army worried about fulfilling its new tasks. It had difficulty in providing sufficient troops to patrol the long Zambezi river frontier with Zambia, without disrupting the economy by calling up territorials and reservists. A further concern was whether the Portuguese would defeat the Frente de Libertaçao de Moçambique (Frelimo) insurgency in Mozambique. If the Portuguese did not the Rhodesians knew that their northeastern border, delineated by a simple wire cattle fence, would be easily penetrated, making the adjacent African subsistence farming areas vulnerable to subversion.

This fear was realized in 1972 but before then, in this first phase of the insurgency, both ZAPU and ZANU chose to send small groups to attempt to cross the sparsely populated, harsh Zambezi valley, making the task of the Rhodesian security forces easier. In almost every one of the operations under study, local Africans would report the whereabouts of the insurgents to the

forces. In some cases, the locals would arrest an intruder before reporting. This was a crucial factor in the successes of the period. It also gave the lie to the claim of ZANU and ZAPU to having universal popular support. It does not infer, however, universal backing for the Rhodesian government because it offered little to attract that. It suggests perhaps that, caught in the middle, the rural African opted for neutrality like many peasant people elsewhere when drawn into a conflict. The nationalists' brutal response would deter and eventually dry up this source of intelligence. They were assisted by the Rhodesian government's inability to protect the rural people or even to reward their loyalty.

---

1 Raeburn, Michael, Black Fire: Accounts of the Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe, Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1981, pp. 1–22; Martin, David & Johnson, Phyllis, Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War, Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1981, pp. 23–24.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE EARLY OPERATIONS: PAGODA I, YOKEL, CANTATA, PAGODA II AND GRAMPUS, APRIL–JULY 1966

It took until April 1966 before the external African nationalists made their first attempt to send men from Zambia to foster rebellion within Rhodesia. In the meantime Rhodesian ingenuity was being tested by the UN oil embargo that Wilson had secured in late December 1965, leading to the closure both of the oil pipeline from the Mozambican port of Beira and the oil refinery at Feruka, near Umtali. Fortunately, South Africa and Portugal turned a blind eye to the Rhodesian importation of refined fuel. Furthermore, South Africa allowed ‘gifts’ of fuel to Rhodesians. Behind the scenes, Anglo-Rhodesia diplomatic contact had been re-established with the aim of settling the impasse. These negotiations were destined to be nothing more than frustrating given the incompatible aims of both sides. The British in particular adopted the mantra of ‘no independence before majority rule’, something that Smith could not stomach.

In April Rhodesians were enthralled by the saga of a small Greek oil tanker, Joanna V, as it attempted to break the British naval blockade on Beira. The Joanna V evaded the Royal Navy but diplomatic action prevented the landing of her oil. Diplomatic pressure also spurred exiled African nationalists into action despite their paucity of trained personnel. The African members of the United Nations (UN) Special Committee on Colonialism were pressing the British to use force. Simultaneously, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as the main potential financier of the insurgency, warned that action was a condition for any grant to either ZANU or ZAPU.

Having not yet attracted any OAU money, ZANU’s external leader, advocate

Herbert Chitepo, reacted. He had set up a training camp at Itumbi Reefs gold mine near Mbeya in southwestern Tanzania, commanded by William Ndanga (the Crocodile Gang leader) and Felix Santana (Ndanga's fellow graduate from the first Ghanaian training course). From there trainees were sent on further courses at the Nanking military college in China or provided by Egypt or Ghana. Chitepo aimed at fostering a revolution in Rhodesia, attracting recruits and weakening the government by damaging white morale and encouraging white emigration.

He chose 20 men, divided them into four sub-units and gave them separate ambitious, almost surreal assignments. He ordered the first unit, five men commanded by Brown Chigwada, to blow up the oil pipeline near Umtali and to recruit locals; Comrade Mudukuti and one other were tasked to destroy the main bridges south of Fort Victoria (now Masvingo) to interrupt the flow of fuel from South Africa; the third unit was to subvert the Zwimba Tribal Trust Land, north of Hartley (now Chegutu). Its six men included two Crocodile Gang veterans, Abel Denga and Master Tresha. The fourth unit was sent to subvert the Midlands and to destroy the pylons carrying the Kariba–Norton powerline en route. Its seven men were Simon Chimbodza, Christopher Chatambudza, Nathan Charumuka, Godwin Manyerenyere, Peter, Ephraim Shenjere and David Guzuzu. The four teams were armed with Soviet Simonov SKS 7.62mm rifles, French MAT-49 9mm sub-machine guns, German Luger 9mm pistols, Soviet F1 and RGD5 grenades, seven- and 14-ounce slabs of Soviet TNT, German electrical detonators and connector-capped fuses.

PWO Wurayayi’s patrol calls in the BSAP to search prisoners, Operation Grampus, 1966. Photo Masodja

PWO Wurayayi's patrol from Company HQ 1RAR during Operation Grampus. Wurayayi is second from right. Photo Masodja

The 20 men were ferried across the Zambezi near Chirundu in dugout canoes on Sunday, 3 April 1966, and began their march through the hot, dry, thorny wilderness of the Zambezi valley. As they went the Zambian government took measures to pre-empt the inevitable Rhodesian reaction. It prevented inflammatory statements by the Rhodesian African nationalists being broadcast from Zambia and forbade them from carrying weapons within Zambia and attempted to stop the inflow of weapons from Tanzania.

Once across the river, the invading party divided into a 13-man group and the seven-man Midlands team and set off. The 13-man party reached the main road 20 miles short of Makuti, a small settlement in the Zambezi escarpment at the junction of the roads to Chirundu and Kariba, on Monday, 4 April where they waved down a Central African Road Services truck. The driver charged them £1 a head and drove them to Sinoia Caves, just east of Sinoia, where they dropped off Abel Denga and his five men bound for the Zwimba Reserve. The truck went on to the junction with the road to Mtoroshanga (now Mutorashanga), just beyond Banket. There Brown Chigwada and his team disembarked. Finally, the truck deposited Mudukuti and his companion in Salisbury where they caught a taxi to Buhera to stay with relatives.

That evening, Monday, 4 April, the seven-man Midlands team blocked the main Chirundu–Makuti road with a log and lay in ambush. Their effort counted against them because, although they fired on the first car coming from Chirundu, its Asian driver swerved around the log and sped off to report to the BSAP at Makuti. To lighten their load, they abandoned their radio transmitter and made off toward the service road of the Kariba–Norton powerline. Although the BSAP found their ambush position, expended cartridge cases and the radio, their 185-kilometre southeastward march to Sinoia (now Chinoyi) was undetected.

On Tuesday, 5 April, Chigwada's team reached the Sutton mine store where

they bought food. They arrived at Concession, north of Salisbury, on Thursday, 7 April and hired a taxi. After it dropped them off in the eastern districts 20 miles north of Rusape, they walked to a relative's kraal, arriving on Saturday, 9 April. Chigwada and Godfrey Matanga then left to contact a sympathetic teacher at Old Umtali mission. They were betrayed there and arrested by the BSAP at dawn on Wednesday, 13 April. Their interrogation yielded the whereabouts of their three companions who were detained at 0300 hours on Thursday, 14 April. In the process a police dog mauled one of them, Langton Kamatano, when he reached for his weapon. Another fled and was shot and wounded. The BSAP took a pistol off Chigwada and three Soviet SKS rifles, two French MAT sub-machine guns and grenades off his team. More importantly, further interrogation yielded details of the operation and led to the immediate arrest of Mudukuti and his companion on their way to Fort Victoria. They were all charged with an attempt to overthrow the government and would be sentenced on 22 June 1966 to 20 years in prison for the possession of weapons and explosives. That left two groups outstanding.

The whereabouts of the Denga group remained undiscovered but the Midlands team betrayed something of their presence on Tuesday, 12 April by attempting to sabotage an electricity pylon near the Alaska mine. They were let down by their training, however, because they inserted the detonator into the wrong position and it simply blew the explosive block apart instead of igniting it. They marched on and based themselves near Golden Kopje mine, 15 kilometres south of Sinoia and next at the abandoned Red mine on Hunyani farm, just northeast of the town. Their sabotage activities and an ineffectual attack on a police station alerted the BSAP. Then an informer facilitated contact between them and an African Special Branch (SB) member posing as a ZANU sympathizer. The result was that SB headquarters in Salisbury briefed the BSAP officer in charge in Sinoia, Chief Superintendent John Cannon DFC (a former RAF bomber pilot) and the OCC.

The question was whether to arrest the 'Armageddon' group (as they were codenamed) immediately or to keep them under surveillance in the hope of uncovering active ZANU collaborators. Although the majority of the OCC favoured the latter course, Frank Barfoot, the police commissioner, disagreed. He argued that, under the Police Act, he alone was responsible for the

maintenance of law and order and could not put the public in danger any longer. He enlisted helicopter support from the RRAF and called up the members of the Sinoia Police Reserve and sent a contingent of the paramilitary police Support Unit to reinforce Sinoia's regular uniformed police officers. By ignoring its trained and experienced regular personnel, Barfoot angered the Rhodesian army.

The Armageddon group proved elusive by not sleeping in the same place twice. They were spotted buying food close to Sinoia police station but evaded the consequent sweep. Finally, on Wednesday, 27 April, in preparation for an attack on a nearby white-owned farm, the group made the mistake of asking the SB 'sympathizer', who owned a Ford Anglia station-wagon, to collect supplies, including ammunition, from ZANU sympathizers in Salisbury. They proposed that, on his return, he should meet them at 1100 hours the next day just east of the Hunyani river at the junction of the old and main roads to Salisbury. The Hunyani river flows northward beyond the eastern outskirts of Sinoia.

The 'sympathizer' drove to Salisbury on Thursday, 28 April to brief the BSAP who had him discreetly followed to Sinoia the next morning by a car driven by Detective Inspector 'Dusty' Binns and by an armed Alouette III helicopter flown by Flight Lieutenant Murray Hofmeyr. Three other helicopters, commanded by Flight Lieutenant Peter Petter-Bowyer, brought up the rear.

In advance of the arrival of the 'sympathizer', Cannon threw a 40-man cordon round the expected rendezvous, deploying his police reservists (local farmers clad in highly visible blue denim uniforms and issued with obsolete Lee-Enfield .303 rifles) and paramilitary elements of the Support Unit. Cannon's plan was thrown into disarray when the 'sympathizer' arrived but, instead of going northward, strode south into the bush. He re-emerged shortly, started his Anglia and drove back to Binns to report that the Armageddon group was 300 metres south of the junction. Cannon responded by having the helicopters quickly reposition the cordon. He was fortunate because the sight and sound of the helicopters, flying and landing around them, drove the insurgents to ground.

Once in position, a poorly co-ordinated inward sweep began from the west,

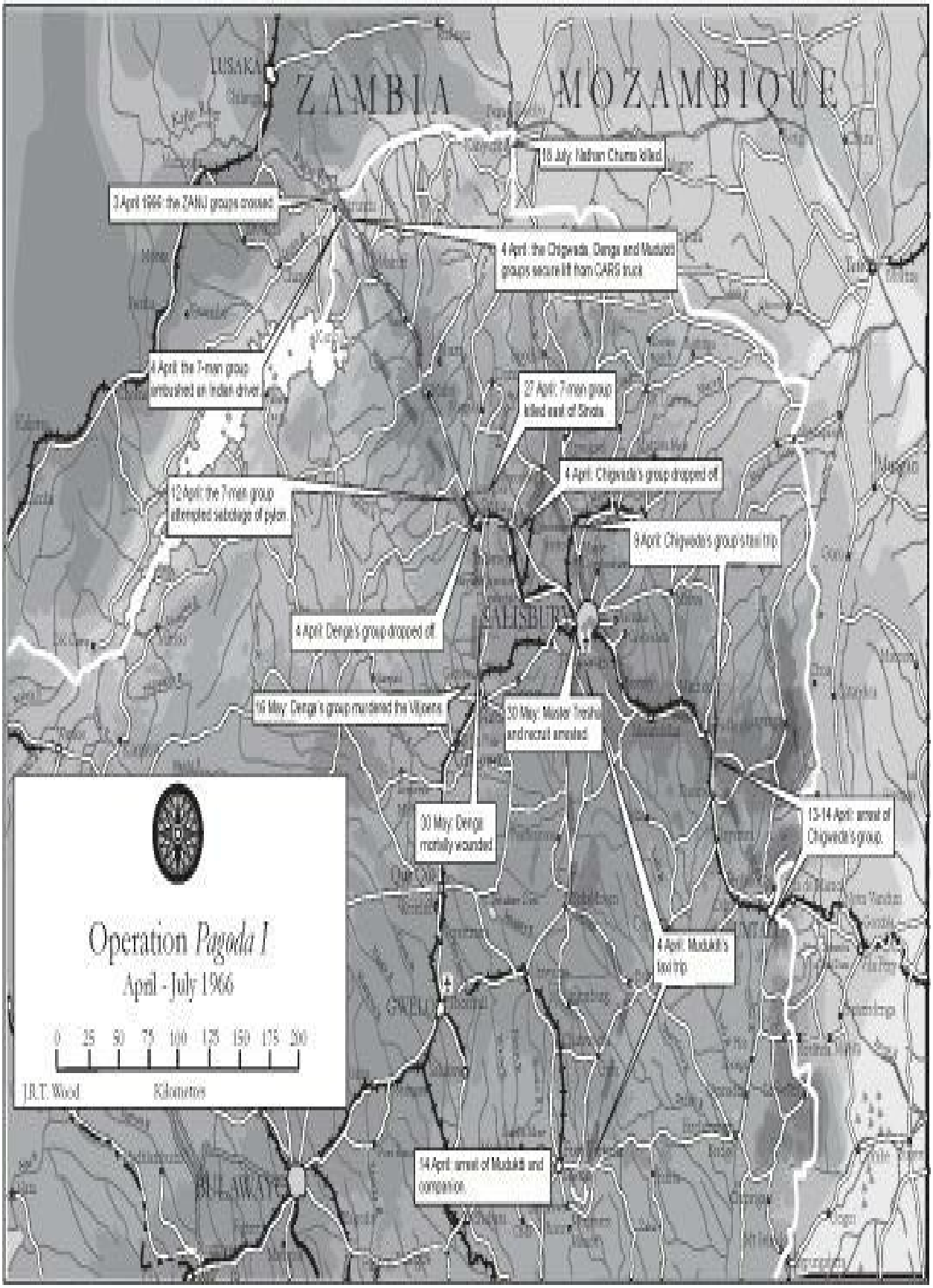
not assisted by the lack of training. The BSAP and the RRAF also had incompatible radios which forced the helicopter pilots to land to tell the sweepline what lay ahead of them. (See map on first page of colour section)

Petter-Bowyer spotted the first insurgent who promptly fired at him; he then called over Hofmeyr to respond with his MAG 7.62mm machine gun. In doing so, the Alouettes nearly collided as Petter-Bowyer banked toward Hofmeyr. The gun had infantry iron sights that made deflection shooting a matter of guesswork for Hofmeyr's gunner, Sergeant George Carmichael. It took several bursts to knock the man down. The next problem was that the inexperienced reservists strayed into the opposite stop line's line of fire. One excited group endangered themselves by gathering around their first kill. Their skins were saved by the arrival Major P.A. Billy Conn, second in command of the RLI, and John Moore, his orderly room sergeant-major. Conn had been driving past, en route to visit his troops at Chirundu. He noticed the circling helicopters and volunteered his services. A soldier of considerable experience, Conn shouted a warning to the reservists and shot an insurgent in the act of throwing a grenade, which exploded and killed another insurgent. By the end of what the Zimbabwean government in 1980 would grandly entitle 'The Battle of Chinoyi', at 1355 hours ZANU comrades Chimbodza, Chatambudza, Charumuka, Manyerenyere, Peter, Shenjere and Guzuzu were dead. Their sacrifice is celebrated annually with a public holiday on 29 April.

ZANU promptly claimed two helicopters were shot down and 25 policemen killed and 30 wounded. What was correct nevertheless was the observation by Washington Malianga, a ZANU spokesman in Lusaka, that the "battle" was "only the beginning". The immediate gain for ZANU was its first tranche of funds from the OAU.

The Rhodesian success, however, did not assuage the irritation of the OCC and the Rhodesian army in particular, because it would take several more operations over the next four months before Barfoot conceded the necessity for the joint command of an operation. He had ignored the decision of the OCC in 1964 that any counter-insurgency operation would be run by a Joint Operations Centre (JOC). (A JOC comprised the senior army, air force and BSAP officers assigned to an operation, supported by the local SB

representative, the district commissioner or another senior Internal Affairs official and co-opted members. Using the intelligence available, the JOC would plan and implement the effort to meet the threat.)


ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE
LUSAKA
SALISBURY
GWELO
BULAWAYO
3 April 1966: the ZANLI groups crossed
18 July: Nathan Chuma killed
4 April: the Chigwada, Denga and Nyakasa groups secure lift from CARS truck
4 April: the 7-man group ambushed on Indian driver
27 April: 7-man group killed east of Sinoia
4 April: Chigwada's group dropped off
12 April: the 7-man group attempted sabotage of pylon
9 April: Chigwada's group start trip
6 April: Denga's group dropped off
16 May: Denga's group murdered the Mlizens
30 May: Master Tendai and recruit arrested
30 May: Denga mortally wounded
13-14 April: arrest of Chigwada's group.
4 April: Muzukili's lost trip
14 April: arrest of Muzukili and companion.
Operation Pagoda I
April - July 1966
0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200
J.R.T. Wood
Kilometres

Petter-Bowyer, an innovator who was awarded the Military Forces Commendation for his coolness under fire and for his control of the operation, had learned several lessons. He trained his helicopter pilots to fly with maximum weight and stressed the need for map-reading skills. The Rhodesian Air Force came to demand that its pilots be capable of reading maps so well that they could navigate with a margin of error of 50 metres to a target. A police dog had been deployed at Sinoia and his memory of the dog's speed along tracks led Petter-Bowyer to experiment successfully with controlling a tracker dog from a helicopter. Petter-Bowyer's inventive mind would serve Rhodesia well in the future.

Hitherto, the RRAF commander, Air Vice-Marshal Harold Hawkins, had been loath to risk his helicopters as he maintained that ground forces did not need their support to deal with insurgents. The 'battle' of Sinoia changed that. Although air force headquarters criticized Carmichael for firing 147 rounds in six bursts to get his man, it responded by purchasing French Collimateur lightweight reflector gun sights for its MAGs.

While Denga and his men remained undetected in the Zwimba Tribal Trust Land, the Rhodesian authorities were dealing with a backlog of cases and current internal dissent. On 13 May 20 ZAPU saboteurs, trained in the Soviet Union, Communist China and North Korea, were sentenced in Salisbury to 20 years in prison for entering illegally from Zambia in April and October 1965 and for plotting to overthrow the Rhodesian government. Simultaneously, 25 African nationalists were restricted, bringing the total in restriction to 385. Another 58 were being detained without trial. The ministry of law and order showed some leniency, however, in that to ease problems at the University College of Rhodesia, it agreed that any students restricted could remain on the campus whenever possible.

Denga and his men had succeeded in securing a local recruit and were about to strike. On Monday night, 16 May, they knocked on the front door of the homestead of Nevada farm at Gadzema, 25 kilometres north of Hartley. When the farmer, Johannes Hendrik Viljoen (39) failed to open it, they fired through the door, killing him and his wife, Johanna (36). Denga's men then helped themselves to food and tucked the Viljoens' two children, three-year-

old Tommy and the eleven-month-old Yonlandre, into bed before disappearing into the night. The Viljoens' eldest child, ten-year-old Nicolette, was away at boarding school in Sinoia. The next morning, Tommy Viljoen told the police that he heard shouting at the door and then "mummy and daddy lay down and went to sleep on the floor".[2] Rhodesians would regard this first murder of whites by African nationalists since that of Petrus Oberholzer on 4 July 1964 as the beginning of the real war. The Rhodesian security forces launched their largest manhunt to date, entitled Operation Pagoda I, with Barfoot permitting the Rhodesian army to participate on the understanding that internal security remained his responsibility. The operation was complicated by the need to deploy forces to the Karoi area when three whites were found murdered on their farm. In the event, this turned out to be a criminal rather than a terrorist act, and an African servant was arrested.

The next morning, Tuesday, 17 May, ZANU headquarters in Lusaka lauded the Viljoen murders and warned that for "every one of our sons and daughters killed by the settlers we shall kill settlers with compound interest". In the House of Commons in London, the colonial secretary, Arthur Bottomley, condemned violence of any variety. Reginald Paget, the pro-Rhodesian Labour MP, however, blamed the murders on Kaunda and the Zambian government for conniving with and encouraging ZANU and for inciting murder through statements and broadcasts by Radio Zambia.

The Rhodesian security forces soon accounted for the Pagoda I cadres and their recruits despite their rapid flight across Rhodesia. The only escapee returned to Lusaka via Mozambique and Malawi. During the night of 29–30 May in the Zwimba Tribal Trust Land, police reservists, deployed with 11 Troop 3 Commando 1RLI, mortally wounded Abel Denga. Master Tresha and the local recruit had gone to Bulawayo but, after the recruit murdered a municipal policeman there, they had left. They were caught on Monday morning, 30 May, at Mount Hampden just northeast of Salisbury. Nathan Chuma was pursued northwestward to Karoi and then to the Kanyemba area on the southern bank of the Zambezi where he was killed on 18 July by B Company 1RAR. Edmund Nyandoro was captured in the Mtoko area northeast of Salisbury in November 1966. Tresha escaped the gallows by being underage. On 25 June 1966 he was sentenced to 20 years in prison for

the murder of Petrus Oberholzer. Nyandoro and one other were sentenced to death on 8 February 1967 for the murder of the Viljoens. Two others were sentenced on 14 March 1967 to 24 years' imprisonment for attempted murder and possession of offensive weapons.

ZANU was not deterred by the failure and the Rhodesian security forces failed to detect its next incursion in mid-June 1966. All Operation Yokel yielded was further army irritation with police leadership after two weeks of fruitless ambushes in the northern end of the Great Dyke, the 530-kilometre mineral-rich range that divides the country from north to south.

In preparation for what would be Operation Husk in June 1967 in northern Mashonaland, ZANU recruited ten Rhodesian expatriates in Lusaka and sent them to its Itumbi Reefs camp at Mbeya, Tanzania, to be trained in bushcraft, navigation and weapon handling, coupled with political indoctrination along Eastern bloc lines. The ten were split into two groups: the four-man Uhuru commanded by Gilbert Mutasa, and the six-man Tema Tema led by Comrade Gambara with Chester Tichafa Chiweshe, a Nanking graduate, as his political commissar. The two groups stayed at Itumbi until Christmas Eve 1966 and were then sent to ZANU holding camps in Zambia.

The preoccupation of the BSAP was dealing with internal subversives including a group of academics at the University College of Rhodesia. Restrictions, detention and deportations did not deter them, however.

Also anxious to secure the promised OAU funding, ZAPU launched two incursions. Peter MacKay, a British ZAPU sympathizer and former Guards officer, drove the first party of 13 armed men in a truck from Lusaka into Bechuanaland, crossing the Zambezi on a ferry at Kazungula on Sunday, 17 July. He dropped them off at a point on the Rhodesian border adjacent to the southern boundary of Rhodesia's Wankie game reserve. Once across the border cattle fence, the men split up into two groups, one aiming to operate in the Tjolotjo Tribal Trust Land northwest of Bulawayo and the other in Joshua Nkomo's home ground of Kezi, 90 kilometres south of Bulawayo. Six members, however, got lost and confused and returned to Bechuanaland where they were arrested by the Bechuanaland police, imprisoned and later deported to Zambia. The launching of Operation Cantata in Rhodesia resulted in the capture of the remaining seven in mid-August 1966.

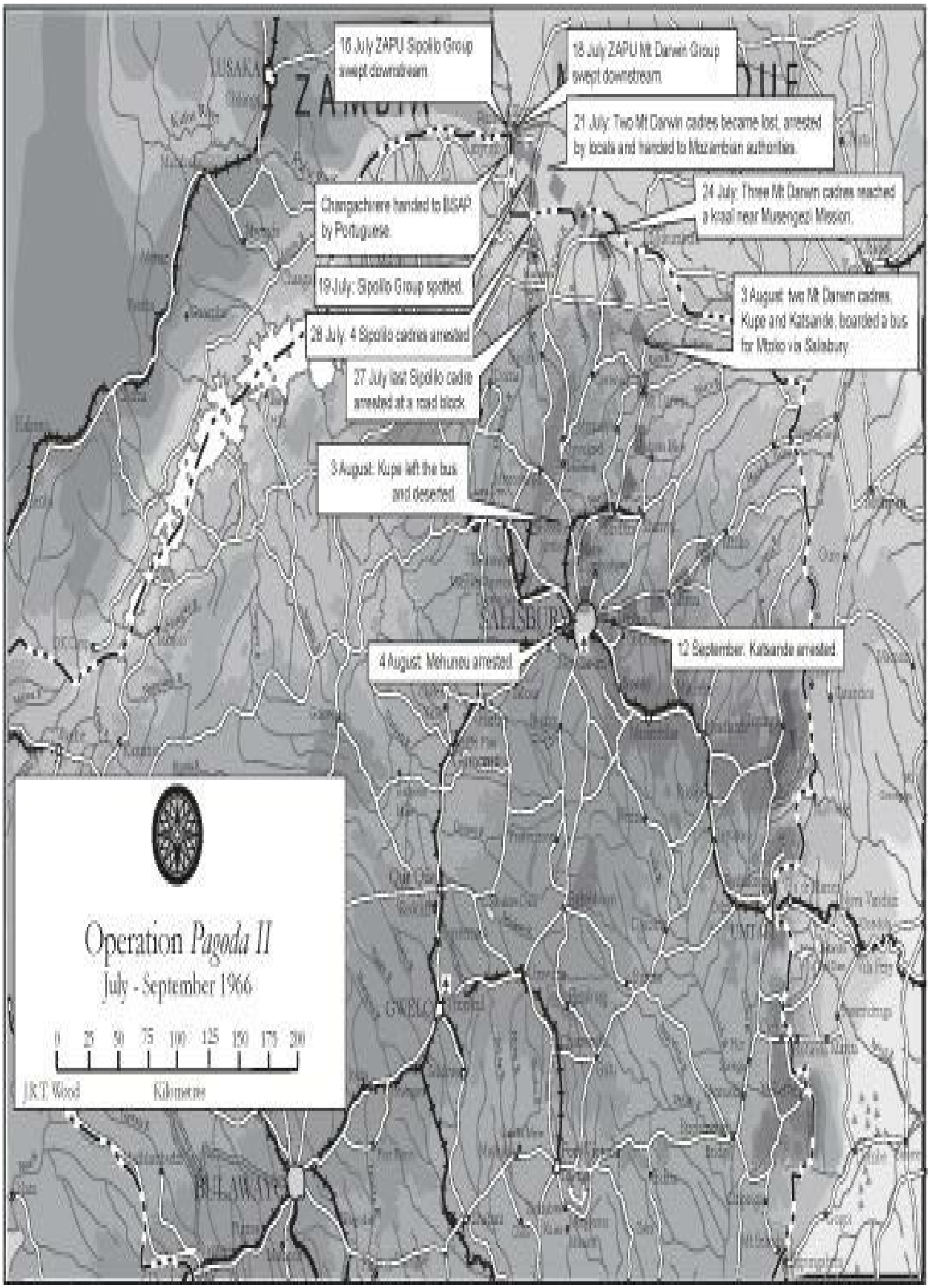
Frank Barfoot, BSAP commissioner, 1963–68. Photo Blue and Old Gold

The second ZAPU incursion was equally ill fated. On Saturday, 16 July five cadres trained in Egypt, five in Russia and one in China, assembled at Ndhlovu farm holding camp near Lusaka. They were divided into two teams and were ordered by James Chikerema, ZAPU's external leader, and Akim Ndhlovu from ZAPU headquarters, Lusaka, to subvert their chosen areas and recruit and train locals. Five men were bound for Mount Darwin where Johannes Chitepo, father of Herbert Chitepo of ZANU, awaited them. The six-man group was to seek out ZAPU contact men in the Sipolilo (now Guruve) area. Once their recruits were trained, both groups were ordered to obtain weapons for the recruits by attacking white-owned farms and police stations. That afternoon both teams were driven in two Land Rovers to a point just upstream of Feira on the Luangwa–Zambezi confluence where the Zambian, Rhodesian and Mozambican borders met. Weapons and ammunition were issued.

At 2000 hours two Zambian fishermen ferried the six-man Sipolilo group across the Zambezi river in a dugout canoe. The strong current pushed them into Mozambique and they landed a mile downstream of the BSAP border post at Kanyemba. In the darkness, Tengayi Changachirere got separated from the rest. Unable to find him, the others walked off in a southerly direction. Changachirere roamed the area for the next few days before being apprehended by Mozambican villagers. They handed him over to the Portuguese authorities who delivered him across the Zambezi to the BSAP at Kanyemba. Three members of the Sipolilo group were sighted on the Angwa river on Monday, 18 July. This led to a follow-up operation mounted by the BSAP, the RLI and the RAR who were in the area on Operation Mikado (border control) protecting the Kanyemba police station. That night it was reported that armed strangers had arrived at Chief Chipoto's kraal. Lieutenant Roy M. Matkovich and 15 men of 5 Platoon B Company 1RAR, supported by BSAP Section Officer Sutton and another policeman, were deployed. In the confusion of a sudden encounter in the dark Matkovich was wounded, Chuma, one of the Viljoen murderers, was killed but the rest of the gang

escaped.

The five-man Mount Darwin group had waited until that evening, Monday, 18 July, before crossing, but they were also swept downstream and landed in Mozambique. At 2200 hours they began a southward march, moving at night and resting during the day. On Thursday, 21 July Charles Mutsangwa and Eric Munyaradzi set off in search of water and got lost. They were arrested by the Mozambican locals, handed over to the Portuguese and transferred to the BSAP. The survivors, Rex Mehuneu, Thomas Katsande and Annamiah Kupe pressed on to find water in the Kadzi river. On Sunday, 24 July, pretending to be passers-by, they bought a goat from a kraal near the Musengezi river. The next day, still heading slowly southeast, they purchased some maize. By Tuesday, 26 July they were crossing the Mzarabani Tribal Trust Land, heading into the Mvuradona mountains.


16 July ZAPU Sipolilo Group swept downstream.
18 July ZAPU Mt Darwin Group swept downstream.
21 July: Two Mt Darwin cadres became lost, arrested by locals and handed to Mozambican authorities.
Changachirere handed to BSAP by Portuguese.
24 July: Three Mt Darwin cadres reached a kraal near Musengezi Mission.
19 July: Sipolilo Group spotted.
3 August: two Mt Darwin cadres, Kupe and Kaisarde, boarded a bus for Mtoko via Salisbury.
28 July: 4 Sipolilo cadres arrested.
27 July last Sipolilo cadre arrested at a road block.
3 August: Kupe left the bus and deserted.
4 August: Mahuneu arrested.
12 September: Kaisarde arrested.
Operation Pagoda II
July - September 1966
0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200
J.K.T. Wood
Kilometres

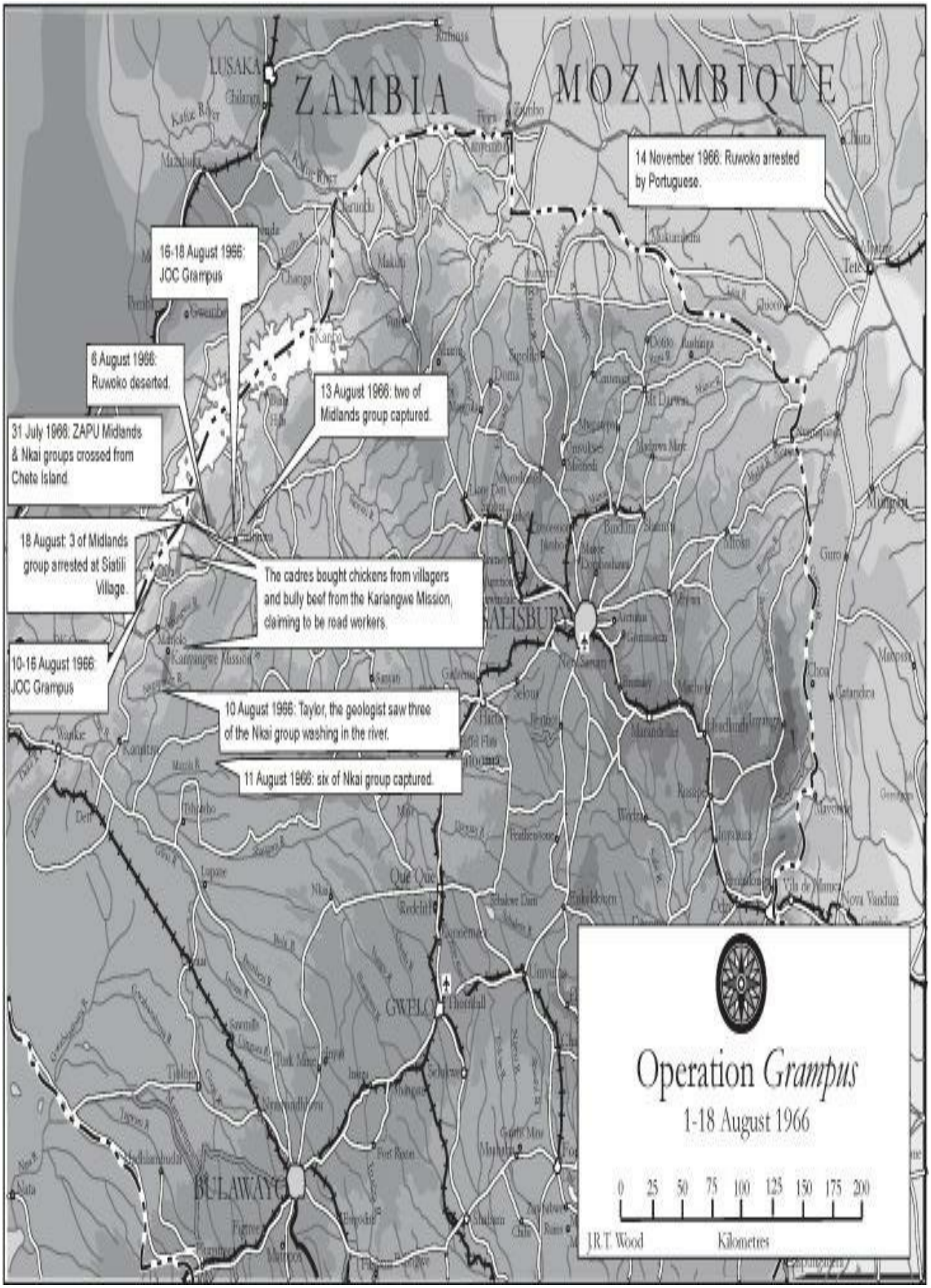
That day, Alexander Mangarayi, Judas Chikwore, Tendayi Shoko and Thomas Mutema of the Sipolilo group were sighted, surrounded and arrested near Hunyani mission on the Mozambican border. Only Newson Rumbanakupetwa, who had deserted earlier in the evening, escaped by hiding in the bush nearby. He reached the main road and caught a bus to Sipolilo only to be arrested the next day, Wednesday, 27 July, at a tsetse-fly-control roadblock.

Two days later the Mount Darwin group surmounted the mountains and cached their weapons near St Albert's mission. After travelling somewhat aimlessly on buses in the Mount Darwin and Kandeya areas, they returned to their cache at 0700 hours on Wednesday, 3 August. They decided that Mehuneu should guard it while Katsande and Kupe took a bus for Salisbury en route to Mtoko. On reaching Concession, north of Salisbury, however, Kupe deserted. He made his way to a relative's kraal in Bechuanaland before returning to Zambia and was the only one to evade arrest. That evening Mehuneu abandoned the weapons and caught a bus to Salisbury where he was recognized and arrested on 4 August 1966. Katsande reached Mtoko but, depressed, decided to return to Salisbury to stay with his younger brother in the Highfield township. He was arrested there on Monday, 12 September 1966. Thus Operation Pagoda II, as the hunt had been named, had accounted for ten out of the eleven infiltrators and eleven SKS rifles, 1,100 rounds of rifle ammunition, 36 grenades, an unspecified quantity of explosives, detonators and fuses, clothing, 13 packs, three compasses, two walkie-talkie radios and a map.

ZAPU was also aiming to insert two six-man teams: the first to subvert the Nkai Tribal Trust Land north of Bulawayo and the second the Midlands area between Que Que (now Kwekwe) and Gwelo (now Gweru). On 31 July 1966 the two teams crossed Kariba lake, disembarking near Chete island at 0100 hours on Monday, 1 August. They set off together but because of the thickness of the bush and their tactic of moving at night, they found the going heavy and were soon hungry. This led them to purchase food from the local Batonka people and from the Kariyangwe mission store. On Saturday, 6 August Lecken Nkosana and Lancelot Ruwoko were also sent ahead, by the

Midlands group, to buy food. Ruwoko took the opportunity to desert, taking with him most of the group's money. The Portuguese at Tete arrested him on 14 November 1966.

An Anglo-American Corporation geologist, Allan Taylor, and his African assistant, Freddie, spotted the remaining eleven members on Wednesday, 10 August near Binga and reported to Major David Heppenstall, commander of D Company 1RAR. The next day Operation Grampus was launched. On the following morning Platoon Warrant Officer Wurayayi (the acting company sergeant-major), a tracker, a batman and a driver, followed the spoor of six of the ZAPU group for 30 kilometres from the Kariyangwe mission to surprise and arrest them near the Mzolo forest.


ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE
LUSAKA
BULAWAYO
GWELO
SALISBURY
14 November 1966: Ruwoko arrested by Portuguese.
16-18 August 1966: JOC Grampus
6 August 1966: Ruwoko deserted.
13 August 1966: two of Midlands group captured.
31 July 1966: ZAPU Midlands & Nkai groups crossed from Chete Island.
18 August: 3 of Midlands group arrested at Sistili Village.
The cadres bought chickens from villagers and bully beef from the Kariangwe Mission, claiming to be road workers.
10-16 August 1966: JOC Grampus
10 August 1966: Taylor, the geologist saw three of the Nkai group washing in the river.
11 August 1966: six of Nkai group captured.
Operation Grampus
1-18 August 1966
0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200
Kilometres
J.R.T. Wood

Two of the Midlands group were arrested near Siabuywa on 13 August and Grampus ended on 18 August with the capture of the remaining three Midlands cadres at Siatili village on the shore of Kariba lake just south of Chete island. All eleven men were sentenced in the high court in Bulawayo on 29 September 1966 to 18 years in prison for possessing arms, including sub-machine guns, rifles and grenades, for being trained as terrorists in Algeria, and entering Rhodesia to “kill whites”.

All that ZAPU and ZANU were accomplishing was to give the Rhodesian security forces invaluable experience in combined small-unit operations, including the honing of tracking skills, the testing of equipment, rations, weapons and inter-service co-ordination, all good practice for what was to come.

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2 Cole, Barbara, The Elite: The Story of The Rhodesian Special Air Service, Three Knights Publishing, Amanzimtoti, 1984, p 29.

CHAPTER TWO:

HONING THE COUNTER-INSURGENCY ORGANIZATION, AUGUST 1966

The argument over inter-service co-operation, or lack of it, was coming to a head, particularly because army officers had been forced to accept the leadership of a more junior policeman on Operation Grampus. Another failing recognized by the army, but never addressed, was the need to wage psychological war. Even though there had been steady reporting of the presence of terrorists by the African population, the army worried about evidence of curbing it by terrorist intimidation. All this alarmed the cabinet who demanded the chiefs of staff recommend courses of action.

Colonel Alec West, the chairman of the Joint Planning Staff (JPS), disputed the BSAP contention that the threat came only from armed criminals who should be arrested, tried and punished. Instead he contended, Rhodesia was faced by the first phase of a revolutionary war aimed at overthrowing the existing political order. This had to be defeated before it developed further and required more than a military response. As the military had urged, political and public acknowledgement of the threat was required along with efforts to secure the vital support of the population. West criticized the BSAP for, unlike the military, failing to recognize the threat, to study it and to train to defeat it. He warned that the impasse over joint operations amounted almost to obstruction. He blamed this on the reactive and defensive approach of the police. What was needed, West urged, was a multi-faceted counter-insurgency campaign involving all branches of the government. There had to be crucial psychological action to isolate the terrorists while securing and maintaining the support of the normally uncommitted majority of people. To weaken the threat further, attacks against terrorist bases and training facilities in neighbouring countries were necessary.

Agreeing with West and urging that the lessons of previous counter-insurgency campaigns had to be learned, the chiefs of staff decried the critical lack of central direction and national and regional co-ordination. For this they blamed Barfoot's narrow legalistic view that the Police Act decreed that he was solely responsible for the maintenance of law and order, including defeating foreign-trained armed insurgents. Because their counter-insurgency-trained troops had not been used, the chiefs of staff decried the calling up of barely trained police reservists, taking them away from their farms, leaving their families vulnerable and lowering local morale. Furthermore, they pointed out, Barfoot was contradicting the instructions given by the prime minister for the conduct of combined operations, instructions given legal authority by an endorsement from the attorney-general. They called for the OCC to be allowed to assume its designated role of co-ordinating all police and military counter-insurgency action and of implementing the JOC concept.

A 2 (Independent) Company MAG gunner mans the main control guard tower, Kariba dam, 1966. Collection Rhodesian Services Association Rhodesia Regiment book project © I. Paper

The chiefs of staff, however, rejected both the proposed appointment of a director of operations answerable only to the prime minister, and the formation of a new co-ordinating body called the Counter-Insurgency Committee chaired by the prime minister and served by the appropriate ministers and their secretaries. Instead with psychological action in mind, the chiefs of staff recommended that the existing Security Council should include the minister and secretary for information and co-opt, when needed, the minister and the secretary for local government and the chief economic adviser.

The idea of a director of operations was revived ten years later, in 1976, and implemented in 1977 in the form of the commander of combined operations and his combined operations headquarters. Although this was a good move, it was too late in the day. Many of its difficulties would have been resolved if it had been established in 1966 when the threat was minimal and there was time to adapt to meet the insurgent challenge in the early 1970s.

The chiefs of staff also criticized the failure of the established Central Security Co-ordinating Committee (CSCC) to have regular meetings, as it was ultimately responsible for all aspects of the counter-insurgency campaign, including ensuring its plans were implemented by the local co-ordinating committees. The CSCC was chaired by a senior official from the prime minister’s department and served by the heads of government departments. The chiefs recommended the co-option of the secretary for information and that the CSCC secretary should study counter-insurgency methods and visit the operational areas to equip him to lead discussion on strategy and tactics. They wanted the CSCC secretary to liaise closely with the JPS to provide a useful link between the OCC and the CSCC.

Arguing that accurate intelligence was the key ingredient of any counter-

insurgency campaign, the chiefs of staff found it imperative that, through his direct control of the SB, Barfoot should cease withholding intelligence from other services. While the CIO collated intelligence at national level and made it available to the Security Council, the OCC and the CSCC, the chiefs argued it should supply the JOCs and the provincial and district security committees with crucial tactical intelligence collected by the SB and uniformed branch of the BSAP.

The chiefs of staff demanded the creation of an efficient and expert information and psychological warfare organization to undertake immediate operations in the areas recently affected by terrorists, such as the Zwimba Tribal Trust Land where Denga and his fellow terrorists had been harboured and fed, and where they had recruited and trained the locals. The chiefs wanted a similar operation in areas vulnerable to subversion like the Dande Tribal Trust Land contiguous with the Mozambican border north of Salisbury. They ruled out reprisals and collective punishment because of the effect on the innocent. They cautioned against complacency and demanded recognition of the true situation that terrorists could not just be dealt with as common criminals because, if nothing else were done, the crisis would deepen.

Warning that western and other powers were monitoring Rhodesian radio traffic, the chiefs urged the tightening of security within government departments and other organizations.

Because African guards, armed with shotguns, already protected the tribal chiefs, the latter wanted the African Police Reserve expanded and armed to defend the villagers. In the event, nothing was done because the politicians feared that armed reservists, left to their own devices and without adequate discipline, supervision or reinforcement, would be easy targets for subversion. Again an opportunity was lost. African armed militias were raised in 1978–79 with some success. The rural Africans were left unprotected and vulnerable, and many would die at the hands of the insurgents.

A 2 (Independent) Company deployment, Kariba area, 1966. Collection Rhodesian Services Association Rhodesia Regiment book project © I. Paper

The chiefs of staff found that, while the existing security legislation was adequate to meet the existing threat, it would have to be revised shortly to avoid inhibiting the security forces. They warned too that the state of emergency could not be lifted until the insurgent threat had diminished. They recommended increased clandestine operations across the international borders against terrorist concentrations, camps and other targets. To this end, they wanted to secure the co-operation of Portugal and possibly Bechuanaland. They knew that co-operation with the Zambians was ruled out.

The consequence of this attempt to secure recognition that Rhodesia was embroiled in the first phase of a revolutionary war and to wrest control of the counter-insurgency from the BSAP, led to discussions with Ian Smith on 26 August 1966 and on the morning of 29 August, to a meeting of the Rhodesian Security Council working party on counter-insurgency chaired by the deputy minister of information, P.K. van der Byl. Reminding the meeting that their primary role was the defence of Rhodesia which included tackling armed intruders, Major-General R.R.J. Putterill, chief of general staff, and Air Vice-Marshal Harold Hawkins, chief of air staff, continued their contest with Barfoot. Supported by the secretary of defence, E.C.W. Trollip, and the attorney-general, T.A.T. Bosman, they reiterated that Rhodesia was at war, in the modern sense of hostilities, without a declaration of war. A current example was the Indonesian confrontation with Malaysia. William Crabtree, the SB commander, agreed that infiltrators no longer crossed the borders to arm themselves from smuggled-in caches of weapons. He noted there was a marked increase in the militancy of the Rhodesian, Mozambican and South West African insurgents since the OAU Liberation Committee had established itself in Dar es Salaam. Furthermore, he added that ZAPU and ZANU had 700–800 trained terrorists between them. Commenting on recent operations, he revealed that among the ill-fated Armageddon group of April 1966 were seven of the 90 Algerian-trained ZANU terrorists based in

Tanzania. He added that most of the personnel from the four ZAPU incursions had been killed or captured with only a handful escaping, some to return to live in their tribal areas.

Barfoot, however, remained adamant that he could not delegate his responsibilities to preserve law and order until the Police Act, and other acts, were amended. Putterill and Hawkins agreed but pointed out that their forces, while accountable for their actions, had to be able to use their initiative and needed to know, for example, when they could fire on a suspected or actual enemy. Bosman sympathized with both sides because the BSAP was entrusted with law and order and the army and RRAF with the defence of the state. He agreed it was difficult to determine when terrorist action amounted to war. He noted the law required the use of minimum force. He warned that the responsibility to act rested on the judgment of the man on the spot who might not have time to refer to a higher authority. He cautioned against altering the law lest it give the impression that the maintenance of law and order was in jeopardy and could provide the excuse for the restoration of "constitutional government in Rhodesia" by an external force. The implementation of martial law, he explained, required no more than the recognition that a state of war existed. He felt the pertinent question was whether a general dispensation regarding when to open fire could be justified in the courts.

The meeting agreed that while the man on the ground had to be responsible for any immediate reaction, he had to act lawfully or face the consequences. They agreed also that the key question was how were the army and RRAF to act without inhibition in defending the state while taking cognizance of the legal requirements upon which Barfoot and Bosman relied. The army and RRAF had to do this without a defined 'no man's land', meaning that the presence of the civilian population had to be taken into account. The meeting agreed it was impracticable to attempt to delineate spheres of influence between the police and the other forces, and that amendment of the security laws would attract unwelcome attention and criticism. They accepted that Rhodesia was at war because the broadcasts by nationalist leaders like Herbert Chitepo were nothing less than declarations of war. Thus anyone in uniform carrying weapons could be construed as having warlike intentions. Bosman expected the Rhodesian courts to agree that the broadcasts showed

definite intentions of aggression. In any case, he reminded the meeting, the possession of weapons was a capital offence.

On the subject of psychological warfare, L.C. Ross, the secretary for information, immigration and tourism, outlined how to reinforce the existing and somewhat successful ad hoc effort. The meeting agreed there should be a permanent bureau to conduct psychological operations and to man an information room in Milton building, Salisbury.

The meeting still had not solved the crucial co-ordination of anti-terrorist operations. The chiefs of staff were still smarting over the temerity of a junior police officer to insist he was exclusively responsible for controlling Operation Grampus despite the presence of a senior army officer. This proved that, despite the operational successes, co-ordination remained difficult at all levels and could not continue because the insurgency was intensifying. They hastened to reassure the meeting that there would be no indiscriminate opening of fire, that there were strict rules of engagement. Barfoot explained there were inherent differences of approach between the BSAP and the other two services. A policeman, for example, was required by law to take immediate action if circumstances demanded it.

Van der Byl insisted that any anti-terrorist operation had to be a joint effort. Putterill and Hawkins agreed and advanced the JOC concept but warned it would not work if Barfoot insisted on the BSAP retaining local control. They added that the establishment of a JOC did not represent the surrender of any part of the BSAP's responsibilities. Barfoot, however, stood fast, refusing to permit a JOC to restrict his men's freedom of action. He argued that, while the issue was merely the maintenance of law and order, there was already adequate inter-service co-ordination. He stressed that operations had to conform to the law. There had to be, for example, an inquest into every death. Bosman thought it difficult to define when the situation required military intervention and who would decide. The meeting agreed that, while this decision should be the responsibility of the proposed counter-insurgency (COIN) committee, the practical difficulties would dictate that it should be automatically delegated to the OCC, who would set up the JOC. The meeting recognized that this was not a perfect solution but felt that it would be workable if reasonable men were prepared to co-operate.

After discussion with the JPS, the meeting recommended the retention of the Security Council augmented by the minister and the secretary for information, immigration and tourism. Its sub-committee, the COIN committee, would be chaired by the prime minister and served by the ministers of law and order, information, defence, and internal affairs, by the heads of ministries of the prime minister and cabinet office, law and order, information, defence, and internal affairs, and by the commissioner of police, the chief of general staff, the chief of air staff, and the director, CIO. The COIN committee's purpose was to advise the prime minister and the Security Council on the formulation, policy and direction of operations on all aspects of the counter-insurgency effort. Its functions would be divided between two sub-committees: namely the OCC, which would deal with the military operations; and the COIN action committee, responsible for the civilian aspects, including psychological warfare. The meeting agreed that these efforts would be assisted by a permanent bureau to collate all data in an information room.

Because intelligence is the vital ingredient of effective operations, the chiefs of staff reiterated their call for its collation by the CIO and timely distribution at the discretion of Flower, the CIO director. Barfoot dismissed this as unworkable. He and Crabtree argued the existing system was working well with Crabtree's SB supplying intelligence to the other services through the director of CIO. The chiefs of staff were unconvinced because during Operation Pagoda I the failure to disseminate intelligence had allowed some of the terrorists to evade capture.

The sub-committee's recommendations, together with a CIO paper on the nature of the threat, were considered at the Security Council meeting at 1700 hours the next day with Ian Smith in the chair. The meeting agreed that, in practice, there would be no time after an incident to secure the COIN committee's authorization for the establishment of a JOC. As the onus for calling for military assistance had to remain with the man on the spot, this meant a JOC would be set up first and authorization would follow. Perhaps as a sop to Barfoot, and because the prime responsibility of the BSAP was the maintenance of law and order and the investigation of crimes, the Security Council agreed not to relegate the BSAP to a mere supporting role to the military in joint operations. Furthermore, the council agreed the African

townships should remain a sole BSAP preserve.

The Security Council accepted the principles and recommendations of the report, and ordered the COIN committee to implement them. Consequently on 26 September army headquarters issued standing orders for the formation and organization of JOCs, for the standardization of their situation reports, responsibilities and the like. The conduct of the counter-insurgency operations was thenceforth conducted efficiently by the JOC system and it would endure for the rest of the war.

CHAPTER THREE:

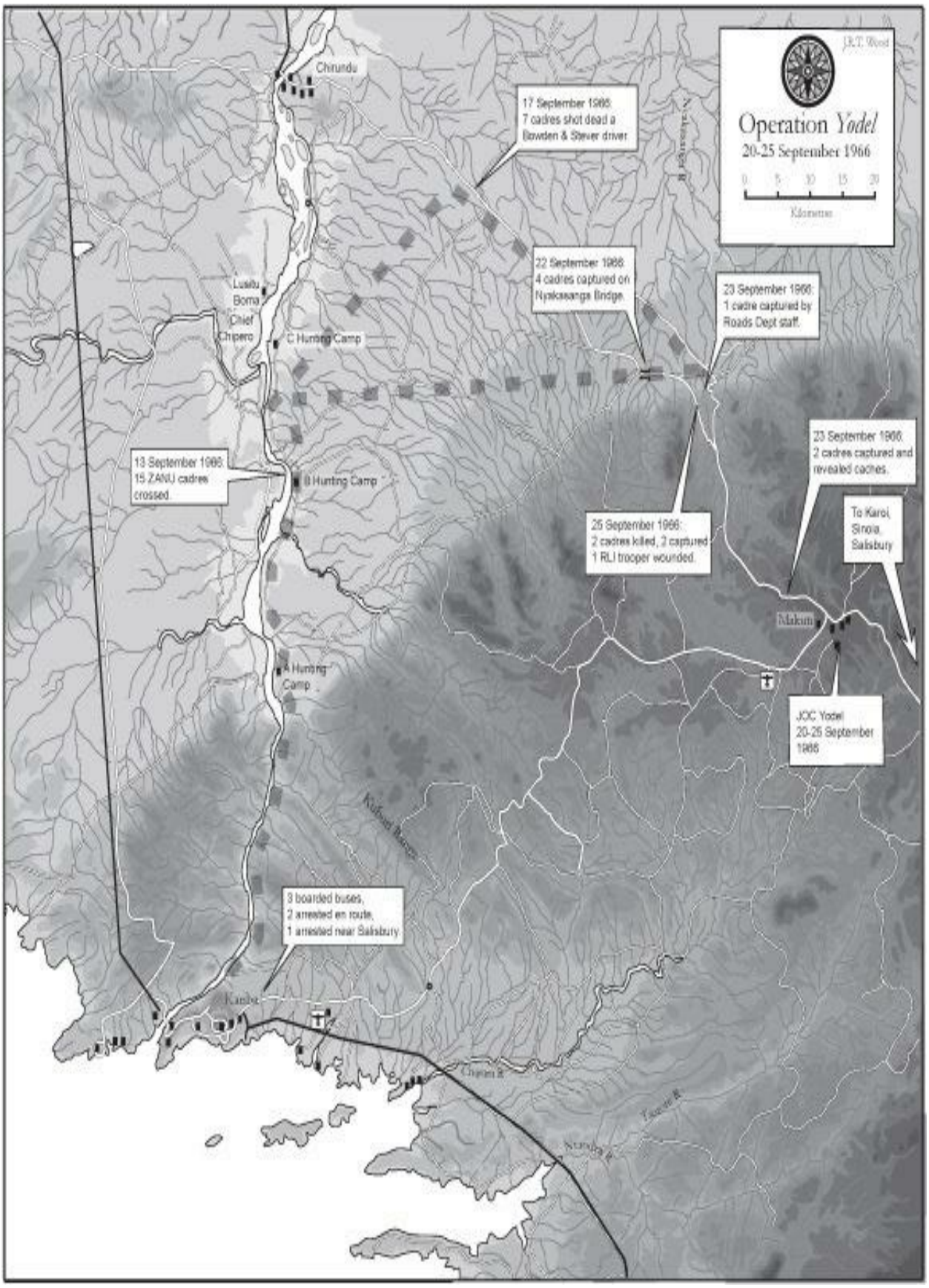
THE PINK PANTHER GRENADIERS AND OPERATION YODEL, AUGUST–SEPTEMBER 1966

While the political and security hierarchy sorted out the co-ordination of command and control and other problems, a new incursion occurred. On 7 August 1966 a third group of eight ZAPU men, led by Comrade Mpofu, a strict disciplinarian, crossed Kariba at Chete island and marched toward the Lupane Tribal Trust Land, which straddled the Shangani river, west of Nkai. Their instructions were to subvert and train the local people in the Nkai and Lupane areas, and later to attack white farms. They reached Gomoza on 23 August and established a base camp in the Mpupu forest. When they split up into pairs, one pair deserted. One of the deserters was arrested in Bulawayo and the other in Salisbury. The knowledge gained from them sparked Operation Cantata II on 24 September and the deployment of C Company 1RAR. It was terminated when nothing was found. The quarry, however, stuck to their task and succeeded in recruiting and training locals in the use of weapons and explosives.

While this group remained undetected, the Rhodesian security forces continued to hunt down the few outstanding ZANU and ZAPU cadres from earlier infiltrations with few evading capture or death. The captured were brought to trial regularly and allowed the Rhodesian government to make public displays of confidence. On 29 August eleven cadres charged with the possession of offensive weapons were committed for trial in Salisbury.

One notable BSAP success was the unmasking of the ZAPU cell at the University College of Rhodesia. A grenade attack on the Pink Panther restaurant on Friday, 12 August wounded seven white patrons and an African waiter and led to the arrest of four Africans responsible for this and other grenade attacks in Salisbury. As a consequence of information gained, the

police, on 1 September 1966, arrested John Andrew Conradie, an assistant lecturer in history, Lameck R.M. Verah, a laboratory assistant, and Ivan Godfrey Dixon. Three days later they were charged under the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act for conspiring to use explosives to injure people and damage buildings. The alternative charge was conspiracy to commit murder. Bail was denied as they were found in possession of Soviet-made grenades and ZAPU pamphlets. External political pressure had, however, allowed the two main figures, Dr Giovanni Arrighi, a political scientist, and Dr John Oliver Reed of the English department, to avoid arrest by emigrating. There was evidence that Arrighi, in particular, had provided assistance for the ZAPU infiltrators in July prior to Operation Pagoda II. On 21 September death sentences were handed down to the African leader and one other of the ZAPU Pink Panther grenadiers. A third was found not guilty and discharged. The fourth man was sentenced to death in Salisbury on 1 November 1966 for throwing a grenade at a white-occupied house. Ivan Dixon was imprisoned for seven years on 16 November for possessing the grenades and more than a thousand ZAPU pamphlets. Four other African associates of Dixon and Conradie received prison terms of six to 12 years on 7 December 1966 from Judge Benjamin Goldin in the high court for being in possession of a grenade and a primer. They were acquitted on other charges, including a grenade attack on a white-owned flat. When tried in February 1967 Conradie pleaded guilty to being part of a conspiracy to commit murder that had injured people and damaged property. He acknowledged also his unlawful possession of 19 grenades, primers and 1,045 ZAPU pamphlets. He revealed that the ZAPU cell formed by Arrighi in 1965 on orders from ZAPU headquarters, Lusaka, had comprised Arrighi, himself and two Africans. Conradie was sentenced on 20 February to 20 years' hard labour, despite his indifferent health. He expected to be released after 14 years for good behaviour but served eleven years and two months and was released in May 1978.


J.R.T. Wood
Operation Yodel
20-25 September 1966
0 5 10 15 20
Kilometres
Chirundu
17 September 1966:
7 cadres shot dead a
Bowden & Stever driver
22 September 1966:
4 cadres captured on
Nyakasanga Bridge.
23 September 1966:
1 cadre captured by
Roads Dept staff.
Lusitu
Boma
Chief
Chipero
C Hunting Camp
13 September 1966:
15 ZANU cadres
crossed.
B Hunting Camp
23 September 1966:
2 cadres captured and
revealed caches.
To Karoi,
Sinoia,
Salisbury
25 September 1966:
2 cadres killed, 2 captured
1 RLI trooper wounded.
Makuni
A Hunting
Camp
JOC Yodel
20-25 September
1966
Kufunyi Range
3 boarded buses,
2 arrested en route,
1 arrested near Salisbury.
Kanyemba
Chiperi R
Nyamuzi R
Tuzuzi R

The arrest and punishment of Conradie dampened active subversion at the university. Moreover, good police work, an extensive and effective informer network and the presence of so many alien African workers meant that thereafter the urban areas were never a fertile ground for the ZANU/ZAPU insurgency. Urban terrorism became a fairly rare event and ZAPU and ZANU units were unable to survive long undetected whenever they ventured into the towns, mostly for rest and recuperation.

ZANU provided the next distraction for the Rhodesian security forces by sending the 15-man Cheka wa Cheka group across the Zambezi river, 20 kilometres south of Chirundu on Tuesday, 13 September. Their orders were to subvert the populations of the Urungwe Tribal Trust Land and the small northern towns of Karoi and Sinoia. The Rhodesian SB, however, had advance notice of their presence. On Monday, 19 September seven of the group stopped a Bowden & Strever pantechnicon van on the road 17 kilometres southeast of Chirundu and shot the driver dead when he refused them a lift. The border-control troops, Major Richard Lockley's 1 Commando 1RLI, reached the scene at dawn. A JOC was set up at Makuti and Operation Yodel was launched. Lockley was reinforced by two 3 Commando 24-man troops (sub-units similar to platoons). In the operations that followed, four cadres were ambushed and captured on the Nyakasanga bridge on Thursday, 22 September by Lieutenant Garth Barrett of 3 Troop 1 Commando. Barrett had seen two Africans in the bush near the bridge late on 19 September and then torches flashing the next night. The four were wearing red swimming trunks under their clothes, into which they had concealed pistols and £70 in Rhodesian currency, an unusual amount for a Rhodesian African, and more than a month's pay for a Rhodesian soldier. The group leader escaped but was arrested by the staff of a department of roads camp at the foot of the escarpment on 23 September. Hours later two more cadres were captured by an RLI vehicle patrol on the main road seven kilometres northwest of Makuti. They revealed the whereabouts of several arms caches, including British-made antipersonnel mines intended for planting in lay-bys on the roads. They also indicated that eight of their companions were still at large.

On 24 September Sandy Saunderson and Lieutenant Tom Douglas of 1 Commando found their crossing point on the Zambezi. At 2245 hours the following night a six-man patrol led by Lieutenant Trevor Desfountain of 1 Commando sprang an immediate ambush on the old Makuti–Chirundu road on eight men walking toward them. The result was two dead and one captured-wounded, at the cost of one RLI trooper slightly wounded. Another cadre was captured when he returned to retrieve the kit he had dropped. Four escaped. The dead, wounded and captured were easily identified by their swimming trunks. What impressed the RLI was the aggressive, well-trained reaction of their opponents who immediately returned a heavy volume of fire until withdrawing when a Verey pistol illuminated the scene. The four escapees cached their weapons, returned to the Zambezi and walked upriver to Kariba where only Comrade Daudanda escaped back to Zambia. He would be killed in late June 1967 during Operation Isotope I. His three comrades boarded buses for Salisbury. Two were arrested en route and the third reached Salisbury but was detained in the nearby Mhondoro Tribal Trust Land. Later Peter Mugare, one of the captured, was shot dead by the SB while attempting to escape after indicating the group's crossing place on the Zambezi. On 3 October 1966 four of the arrested were found guilty of possessing arms and ammunition and were sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment and a fifth man to 12 years. Four others were sentenced to death on 23 November 1966 for firing at the RLI and for possessing sub-machine guns, rockets, bazookas, landmines and explosives. Additional death sentences were handed down on 14 December 1966 to these four and another for the murder of the pantechnicon driver; the other two received sentences of 20 years' imprisonment for possessing offensive weapons.

A national serviceman attends to his machine gun, Kariba area, 1966.
Collection Rhodesian Services Association Rhodesia Regiment book project
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The lessons learned led to the adoption of the effective Icarus parachute flare to illuminate night actions and camouflage clothing because the faded jungle green denims of the Rhodesian troops had appeared whitish in the moonlight.

CHAPTER FOUR:

FURTHER RHODESIAN REASSESSMENT AND OPERATIONS VERMIN AND CANTATA II

The Rhodesians were preoccupied in September 1966 with a visit by Herbert Bowden, British Commonwealth secretary, in search of an Anglo-Rhodesian settlement. ZANU and ZAPU, on the other hand, were attempting to remedy their chronic lack of manpower for their continuing attempt to spark a general uprising in Rhodesia. This want of recruits belied their claims to represent the Rhodesian African population.

The slew of trials of captured insurgents and their collaborators continued in Rhodesia: an African clerk earned himself a sentence in Bulawayo on 6 October 1966 of seven years' imprisonment for supplying two other men with grenades to "disturb a meeting" addressed by Smith.

Some of the insurgents were also being arrested in Botswana on leaving Rhodesia. Nine of them, including seven members of the South African African National Congress (SAANC), were merely cautioned not to use Botswana as a base for violent operations against a neighbouring state.

These arrests had been preceded by a wild ZAPU claim on 27 September that three white policemen had been killed and an African constable wounded when attacked between Karoi and Sinoia, northeast of Salisbury. More accurate was the Rhodesian report that the security forces had shot dead 12 insurgents and arrested scores more. It concluded, therefore, the terrorist campaign was a "dismal failure" despite Britain "pumping money into the countries from which their operations are launched". It added that the infiltrators "far from being welcomed as 'liberators', they find that local Africans detest and despise them and make no bones about giving them away to security forces as quickly as possible". This local support for the security

forces, however, was not nurtured by the Rhodesian government and would not endure too long in the years ahead.

On Monday, 10 October 1966, given their limited trained manpower, the Rhodesian security forces suffered a grievous blow near Chirundu. Three experienced Rhodesian Special Air Service operators, Sergeant-Major R.A. Bouch and colour-sergeants M.P. Cahill and J. Wright, were killed by the accidental detonation of their explosives while preparing to cross the Zambezi river into Zambia by canoe in order to continue a clandestine campaign which had already left over a hundred dead in the ZANU and ZAPU safe havens. They were aiming to sabotage the Kafue river railway bridge and made the mistake of priming their explosives in advance. The explosion knocked unconscious the formidable SAS officer commanding, Major Dudley Coventry (51), who immediately thereafter was fated to endure a forced landing when the Alouette helicopter evacuating him to Kariba lost power. SAS units thereafter only primed explosives on reaching their targets.

At that moment ZAPU had been reinforced by the arrival of 90 Algerian-trained men transferred from Kongwa camp in Tanzania to Ndhlovu farm off the Mumbwa road outside Lusaka. ZAPU would deploy them within weeks.

The Rhodesian estimation of men available to ZANU and ZAPU was somewhat exaggerated. The minister of law and order, D.W. Lardner-Burke, for example, put the figure at 500–700 armed and trained by the Soviets or the Chinese. He said this on Monday, 31 October when proposing a three-month extension of the state of emergency which had been renewed repeatedly since 10 November 1965. He added that the emergency was necessary to combat British sanctions and propaganda. The motion was passed despite the argument of Josiah Gondo MP that the small number of subversives did not justify emergency powers when the African population was co-operating with the government and supporting the forces of law and order. He argued instead that efforts should be made to remove the causes of unrest, so that violence and terror did not become the only means to force change.

Seeking to learn lessons of the past, the Rhodesian security forces examined the concept of using pseudo-terrorist gangs after their successful use in Kenya against the Mau Mau. At the instigation of Senior Assistant

Commissioner E.A. Oppenheim of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the experiment blended African and white members of the SB, CID and the SAS. In a six-week course at the Sabi–Lundi confluence in southeast Rhodesia, tracking and survival in the bush was taught by the noted ecologist Major Allan Savory, a territorial soldier and later politician. Australian Lieutenant 'Spike' Powell, who had fought with the Kenyan pseudo-gangs, described the tactics and the life of a guerrilla. A number of soldiers were trained as trackers, including SAS Lieutenant Brian Robinson, who would establish in 1969 a combat-tracker school at Kariba under the auspices of the School of Infantry. At the same time, Savory founded the Combat Tracker Unit which exploited the skills of the staff of the National Parks, professional hunters and others. The idea of using pseudo-gangs was established but as yet there were no resident insurgent groups to penetrate. The clandestine effort, therefore, was directed at convincing the Zambians that life would be made uncomfortable for them if they continued to harbour Rhodesian African nationalist forces. Later, when a terrorist presence was established in northeastern Rhodesia in the early 1970s, the pseudo-terrorist tactic was implemented and led to the formation of the formidable Selous Scouts.

The attention of the Rhodesian army was drawn to the rules of engagement after the Zambian government claimed that a Zambian woman had been shot and killed on Friday, 4 November 1966 when travelling in a canoe opposite the Rhodesian bank at the Chirundu sugar estates. The Rhodesian army explained that a lance-corporal had responded to orders to apprehend and, if necessary, shoot people crossing the river from Rhodesia. The soldier who fired, Dennis Croukamp, disputes the Zambian claim that he shot a woman. He was later told that the supposed victim had been certified dead several days previously by a female missionary doctor.[3] He recalls his four-man patrol from 13 Troop 3 Commando 1RLI spotted three men in a canoe paddling away from the Rhodesian bank toward Zambia. He was ordered to fire a warning shot because the canoe was 500 metres away. He aimed at the man in the middle and saw him slump down into the river only to be caught by his companion in the stern and dragged toward the Zambian bank. As no disciplinary action or serious protest followed, it seems that Croukamp is right. Even so, it was recognized that the rules of engagement needed reconsideration. The Rhodesian army sought immunity from prosecution for its soldiers but the director of military legal services, Wing Commander

Harold Marsh, argued that the man on the ground had to take responsibility for his actions in all circumstances. J.C. Griffiths, the legal adviser to the commissioner of police, concurred.

Operation Vermin: RRAF Alouettes and E Company 1RAR prepare to deploy. These early operations laid a solid platform for inter-services co-operation. Photo Masodja

The problem of patrolling the Zambezi valley wilderness was also taxing those responsible. The Kenyan practice of designating ‘special areas’ where troops could shoot on sight without fear of legal consequences was considered. Major John Caine, also a Kenyan veteran, cautioned it would affect the local Batonka population and the revenue earned from hunting and tourism. He suggested instead a 20-kilometre-wide stop-and-search strip along the length of the Rhodesian bank of the Zambezi river. SAS Major Coventry agreed but preferred a three-kilometre-wide strip. The representative of 2 (Independent) Company RRR, stationed at Kariba, warned that removing local Africans would lose a source of vital information. He proposed special areas for stop-and-search and a five-kilometre-wide ‘no go’ border strip which would expand to 35 kilometres at night.

The RLI commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel G.P. Walls, (later lieutenant-general and Commander of Combined Operations) criticized the confusion over the right to open fire and warned against allowing the security situation to deteriorate as had happened in Kenya and Malaya. He proposed that inhabited areas be proclaimed special or protected areas with curfews. This included the Chirundu sugar estates, fishing villages, hunting camps and the African villages. He wanted the uninhabited land declared ‘no go’ areas despite the effect on hunting and tourism and the border divided into sections and numbered for ease of reference.

Two Brigade headquarters recommended an eight-kilometre-wide ‘no go’ strip from the Sengwe river (the 1 and 2 Brigade boundary) to the Musengezi river with special areas for the Kariba township, the Chirundu border post and Chief Chipoto’s kraal near Kanyemba. The Zambezi valley from Nyamuomba island, north of the Kariba gorge, to the Hunyani river should be a ‘shoot on sight’ prohibited area in the hours of darkness and a special area during daylight. Care should be taken to avoid disturbing the loyal Africans

unduly but their kraals, along the various hunting and other camps and certain roads within the prohibited areas, would be under curfew. Two Brigade agreed to the division of the areas into sections in preparation for future operations. The orders for opening fire had to ensure the element of surprise and not endanger troops. Care had to be taken near the Mozambican border where troop liaison with the Portuguese had been allowed, including border crossings. Two Brigade believed that the declaration of ‘no go’ areas would not just aid in the elimination of insurgents but would have a deterrent effect if known in Zambia. Two Brigade acknowledged the effect on tourism but argued the prohibition was essential for the defence of Rhodesia. It would allow, for example, landmine fields to be planned to conform to the prohibited areas. The mining was only implemented in the early 1970s and would encircle two-thirds of Rhodesia.

Aerial mainstays of the Rhodesian counter-insurgency effort: a Trojan, or ‘Trog’ (at left), and a Provost, both ideal ground-attack aircraft in the Zambezi valley conditions.

The JPS supported the declaration of special and prohibited areas to give the forces greater freedom of action because insurgent attacks on soft targets, on isolated police stations, military convoys and patrols, and the sabotage of powerlines and vital installations were expected. The JPS argued that a most important lesson learned from past counter-insurgency campaigns was that legislation must anticipate each stage of the campaign. It warned that Rhodesia was facing the early stages of an insurgency which would intensify because, undeterred by the failures to date, ZAPU and ZANU were determined to succeed and were financed, armed and equipped by the OAU and other foreign powers.

Because in two recent operations, local Africans had fed and sheltered terrorists and the terrorists had succeeded in recruiting, indoctrinating and training local youths, the JPS urged a review of strategy and tactics, particularly because the insurgents were following the Maoist revolutionary doctrine. Mao prescribed the establishment of bases in rural areas to mobilize the masses, and to follow his three stages to victory. In the first stage the insurgents would be forced onto the defensive by the government’s offensive. The second stage would be a stalemate while the insurgents laid a foundation for a conventional offensive. In the final stage, the insurgents’ offensive would defeat the government. In the event, the Rhodesian insurgency only reached the second stage in 1979–80.

As the Rhodesian insurgency was clearly in the first phase, the JPS expected the insurgents to concede ground and suffer casualties to gain time. They would select areas in which to subvert the people and to conduct guerrilla attacks. Part of their purpose would be to test the government’s reaction. Clearly the current lull meant ZANU and ZAPU were re-assessing what they had done and were retraining, re-equipping and planning to generate a general insurrection by a large-scale infiltration of terrorists. This meant the

Rhodesian authorities had to secure the support of the population to counter the subversion, deal with isolated incidents and disrupt the insurgents' military preparations. A psychological warfare organization was needed to create an image of a just, generous and confident government, capable of rectifying any mistakes. The other task was to sow dissension in the insurgent ranks and encourage surrenders. In addition, the JPS urged that the acquisition of more and better intelligence was the essential ingredient in the planning of any initiative. It also warned that the Rhodesian security forces had to remain alert and capable of dealing with isolated incidents as well as better-trained terrorists, heavy weapons and mines. It conceded that the insurgents' preparations in Zambia could not be disrupted overtly but commented that covert action was another matter.

The JPS echoed the warning of the successful counter-insurgency expert on Malaya, Sir Robert Thompson, that the lack of a plan, or the failure to follow one consistently, would make it difficult to wrest the initiative from the terrorists. It argued that experience dictated the need for a director of operations and a psychological warfare organization to plan the campaign. It stated this because the new COIN committee chaired by Ian Smith had only met three times and, by confining itself to discussing the latest incidents, had failed to direct the campaign. The supporting Counter-Insurgency Civil Committee (CICC) had met only nine times since its formation in August 1966 and then had confined itself to deciding on follow-up action after incidents and not on future responses. Part of the problem was that the CICC lacked a full-time planner and co-ordinator with time to devote to the campaign. Instead its direction was left to the already overworked G.B. Clarke, the secretary to the prime minister and the cabinet office. The JPS also pointed out that, although charged with operational co-ordination, the OCC could not take the initiative because they were confined to reacting to insurgent activity. The net result was that no one was planning to deal with the vital political, social, economic and administrative aspects that underpinned a successful counter-insurgency campaign. Questioning whether Smith and his committee members had time to devote to the campaign, the JPS argued that, if the CICC had a full-time chairman, the COIN committee would only need to meet infrequently.

Britain remained under Commonwealth and international pressure to stop

attempting to negotiate a settlement with Ian Smith and end his rebellion by force. It meant that the Rhodesian army was forced to consider whether it could defeat an invasion by conventional forces. It felt that it could expel a purely African one but doubted it could a British or United Nations one. Brigadier Keith Coster, the Rhodesian chief of staff, took comfort that the Zambezi river had only three crossing points: at Victoria Falls, Kariba and Chirundu. He acknowledged, however, that if a UN armoured division, composed of American, Canadian and British units, managed to cross the Zambezi, the Rhodesian army could not expel it. Compulsory Rhodesian military service was confined to young males of the non-African population of 224,000 whites and 21,000 Asians and coloureds (mixed race). The 4,080,000 African population was exempted but supplied many volunteers. This meant that the army had under command ten infantry battalions, two of them regular, totalling 11,000 men. The trained reserve amounted to 6,000 and total mobilization of untrained personnel would add a further seven thousand. These 24,000 men, it was felt, could be bolstered by 10,000 South African volunteers. The Rhodesian army, however, could not clothe, equip and arm 34,000 men. Furthermore, it lacked support weapons to resist a conventional attack. Only four battalions had mortars and none had antitank weapons with a range of more than 100 metres. The Rhodesian Artillery Regiment possessed 16 British Ordnance QF 25-pounder howitzers.

Coster concluded that the army could only mount hit-and-run attacks with small mobile teams sustained by prepositioned caches, resupply by air and by resupply forays into friendly neighbouring countries. This required the acquisition of Land Rovers mounting anti-tank rockets or recoilless rifles, armoured cars with 90mm guns, anti-tank mines, additional artillery, medium machine guns, anti-aircraft weapons and improved signals. Most of these items were acquired over the next decade but the invasion threat never materialized. What Coster did receive in October 1966 was a shipment of ordnance large enough for its secret unloading at various railway sidings to take three days to complete. It included Belgian FN 7.62mm rifles to replace the British SLR, both of which were standard NATO issue. Shortly the South African R1 rifle (the FN rifle made under licence) was purchased.

If the insurgents were quiescent, the Rhodesians kept up the clandestine campaign in Zambia which increased tension there with tragic consequences

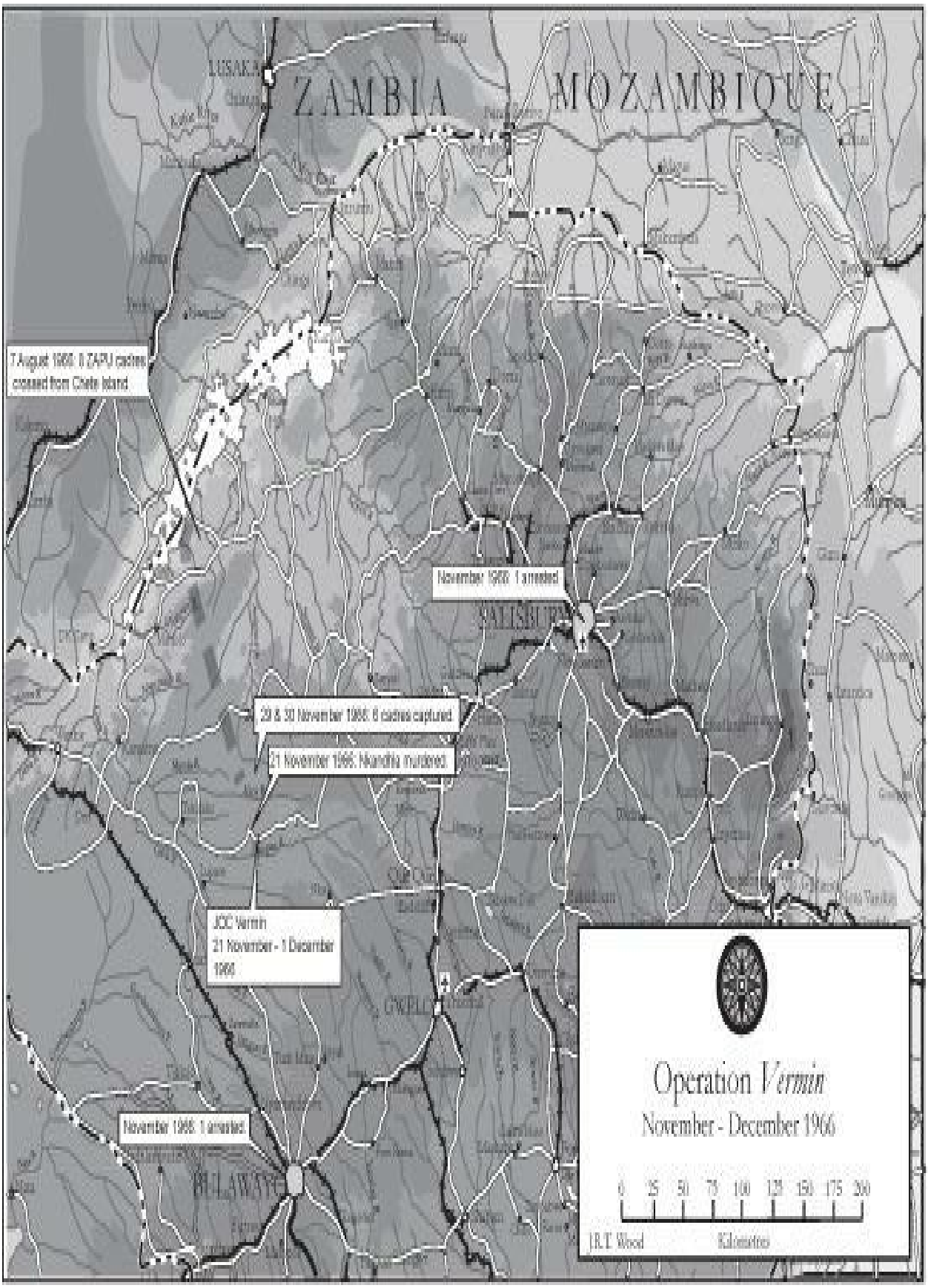
but without undermining the resolve of the Zambian government. On Sunday, 30 October 1966 a Rhodesian SAS unit set fire to the oil depot at Kitwe on the Zambian Copperbelt and withdrew safely. At a time of enduring industrial strife on the copper mines, this aroused suspicions of a sabotage campaign by Zambian whites paid by the Rhodesian government. Mrs Bridget Myburgh was killed and ten whites and several policemen were injured by stoning in race riots. Kaunda and his vice-president, Reuben Kamanga, decried the riots and offered a reward of £250 for information leading to the arrest of the murderers. Riot police were deployed to guard airports and other vital installations against further attack.

In the aftermath, three white Zambian police officers resigned because their African constables refused to obey them and because the government rejected their report that the depot fire was accidental. Zambia had chosen to apply the international embargo of Rhodesia with the consequence of closing the railway to South African ports. This had meant great difficulty for copper production, Zambia's chief source of wealth, and for the procurement of her fuel supplies, both coal from Rhodesia and oil from abroad. The British and Canadians had responded with an airlift of fuel from Dar es Salaam and a return airlift of refined copper exports. Copper was still being flown out but the British military airlift of aviation fuel ended on Monday, 31 October 1966. RAF Transport Command Britannia aircraft had carried nearly 3,500,000 gallons to Ndola and Lusaka.

Zambia had just secured the finance for an eight-inch fuel pipeline to connect Ndola to the ENI oil refinery at Dar es Salaam and for the building of the north-bank hydroelectric power station at Kariba to reduce dependency on Rhodesia's power generation. In addition, Kaunda's government unveiled a four-year development plan on 31 October, proposing to spend £429 million on education, agriculture, the creation of employment, development of rural areas, improvement of trunk roads and railways, and for the generation of electricity on the Kafue river.

The murder of a kraalhead, Jotham Nkandhla, by a burst of automatic gunfire that Monday, 21 November 1966 was a reminder to Rhodesians that the armed struggle with African nationalism was not over. Nkandhla had reported to the BSAP that a group of men had been seen digging holes in

dense bush at Gomoza in the Lupane Tribal Trust Land in northern Matabeleland. When he went to investigate he was shot dead by the six-man group of Algerian-trained ZAPU cadres led by Mpofu who had crossed from Zambia on 4 August 1966 near Chete island. The response to Nkandhla's murder was Operation Vermin, an immediate follow-up by D and E companies 1RAR. The JOC was established at Gomoza cattle dip. Although the tracks were lost, a local led the security forces to underground bunkers and caches of arms and explosives concealed in trees. All six ZAPU men and 17 recruits were captured shortly afterward. Three of the ZAPU cadres were sentenced to death for the murder of Nkandhla and the rest given long prison sentences. The recruits were sentenced on 16 December 1966 to five years in prison for undergoing training.


ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE
LUSAKA
7 August 1966: 8 ZAPU cadres crossed from Chete Island
November 1966: 1 arrested
29 & 30 November 1966: 8 cadres captured
21 November 1966: Nkandhla murdered
JSC Vermin
21 November - 1 December 1966
November 1966: 1 arrested
BULAWAYO
Operation Vermin
November - December 1966
0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200
J.R.T. Wood
Kilometres

Operation Vermin taught the Rhodesian security forces more about joint operations, including the necessity of involving district messengers who knew the people and the ground intimately. It was a worry that the ZAPU team had subverted the Lupane district for three months and remedial action was required. Although there was much to distract the Rhodesians on the political front with the abortive settlement talks on HMS Tiger in Gibraltar and the consequences in the form of UN mandatory sanctions, the internal calm persisted in Rhodesia well into 1967. ZAPU persisted with minor sabotage operations, damaging railway communications and the like. It was no more than a nuisance but it kept the security forces alert.

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3 Croukamp, Dennis, Only My Friends Call Me ‘Crouks’, Dennis Croukamp, Cape Town, 2006, pp. 69–71.

CHAPTER FIVE:

ZANU'S 1967 CAMPAIGN: OPERATIONS GLAMOUR, PANTECHNICON, HUSK AND ISOTOPE I

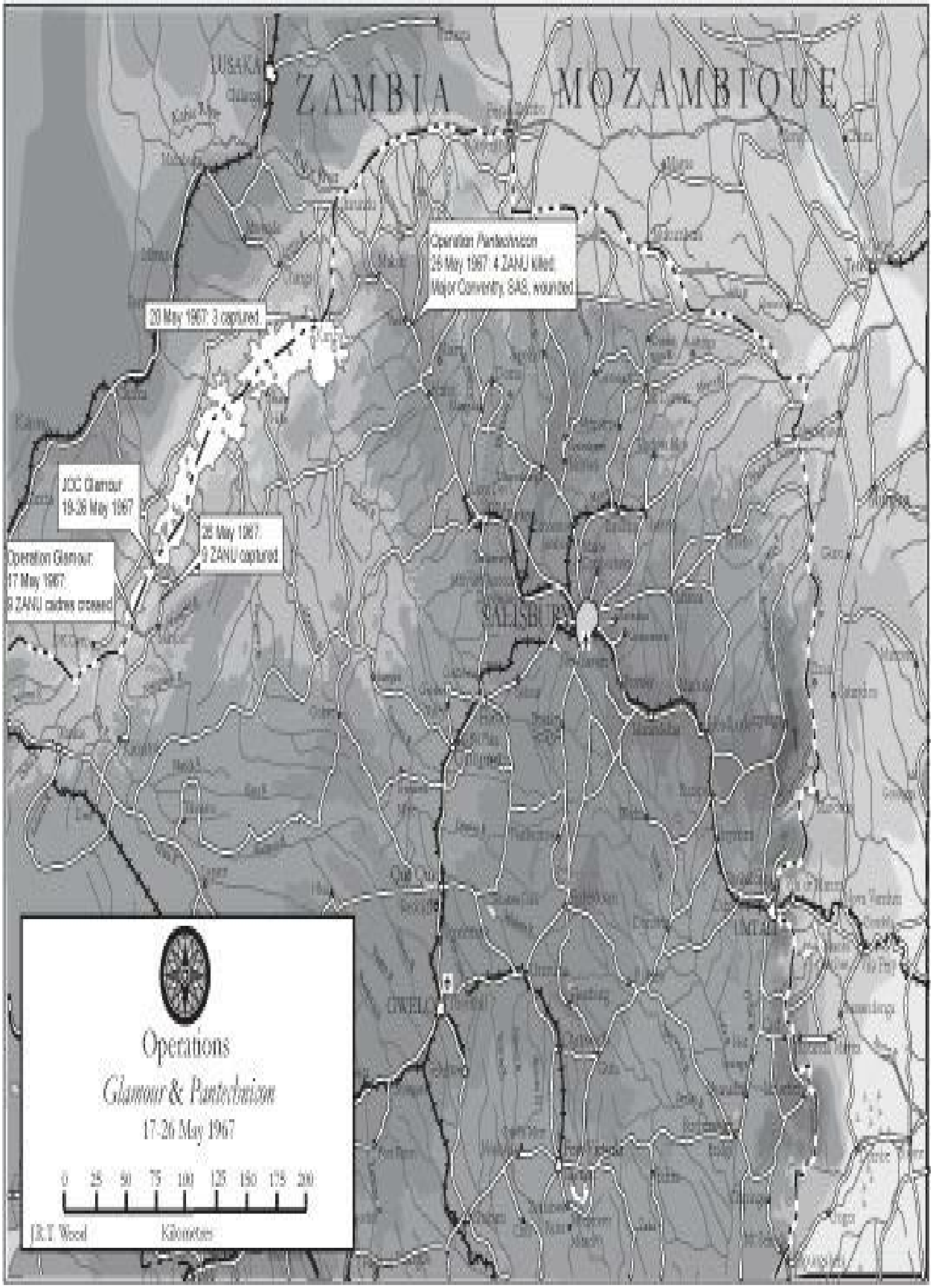
The need for the Rhodesian forces to remain watchful was confirmed by Peter Mtandwa, ZANU's coordinating secretary in Dar es Salaam, marking 30 April 1967 as "the first anniversary of the launching of the armed struggle in Rhodesia" (the fatal first ZANU skirmish at Sinoia on 27 April 1966). Mtandwa not only had the date wrong by a couple of days but he also ignored the sabotage campaign waged by ZAPU since 1962. He argued that the "colonizers of Africa" had come not "with love but simply for the natural resources" that their own countries lacked. He maintained: "We are being turned into murderers by their dealings, and we must kill people like Smith and Wilson." He repeated: "We should do all in our power to kill them."[4] Wilson would hardly have been pleased to find himself the target of assassination let alone bracketed with Smith. What Mtandwa's statement heralded was a further and equally unsuccessful ZANU foray into Rhodesia two weeks later.

Pressed to justify their Eastern bloc and OAU aid, ZANU sought to upset the prevailing calm in Rhodesia by launching a series of new, albeit minor, incursions. The first nine-man team was given the usual ambitious orders, this time to subvert the Midlands, Fort Victoria and Umtali areas. They crossed the Sebungwe narrows at the western tail of Kariba to the Manjolo Tribal Trust Land on 17 May 1967. They got lost almost immediately and abandoned their arms and equipment. Two days later the local Batonka people reported their presence to the Rhodesian security forces. Operation Giamour was initiated with a JOC at Binga just to the north. By 26 May, with the aid of the locals, the RAR had arrested all nine cadres with the last one being pinned in the area by a Provost aircraft flown by Flying Officer Chris

Weinmann until the troops could capture him.

Reflecting ZANU's paucity of manpower, the second incursion was by three men only. They got no further than Kariba township where they surrendered to the BSAP on 20 May. ZANU would suffer more such hard lessons until they found a less inhospitable route into Rhodesia than the mostly uninhabited, dry, harsh and tsetse-fly-ridden Zambezi valley. Ignoring this fiasco, ZANU kept up the fantasy, claiming on 2 June that its forces had ambushed a Rhodesian army convoy, killing nine soldiers and wounding others.

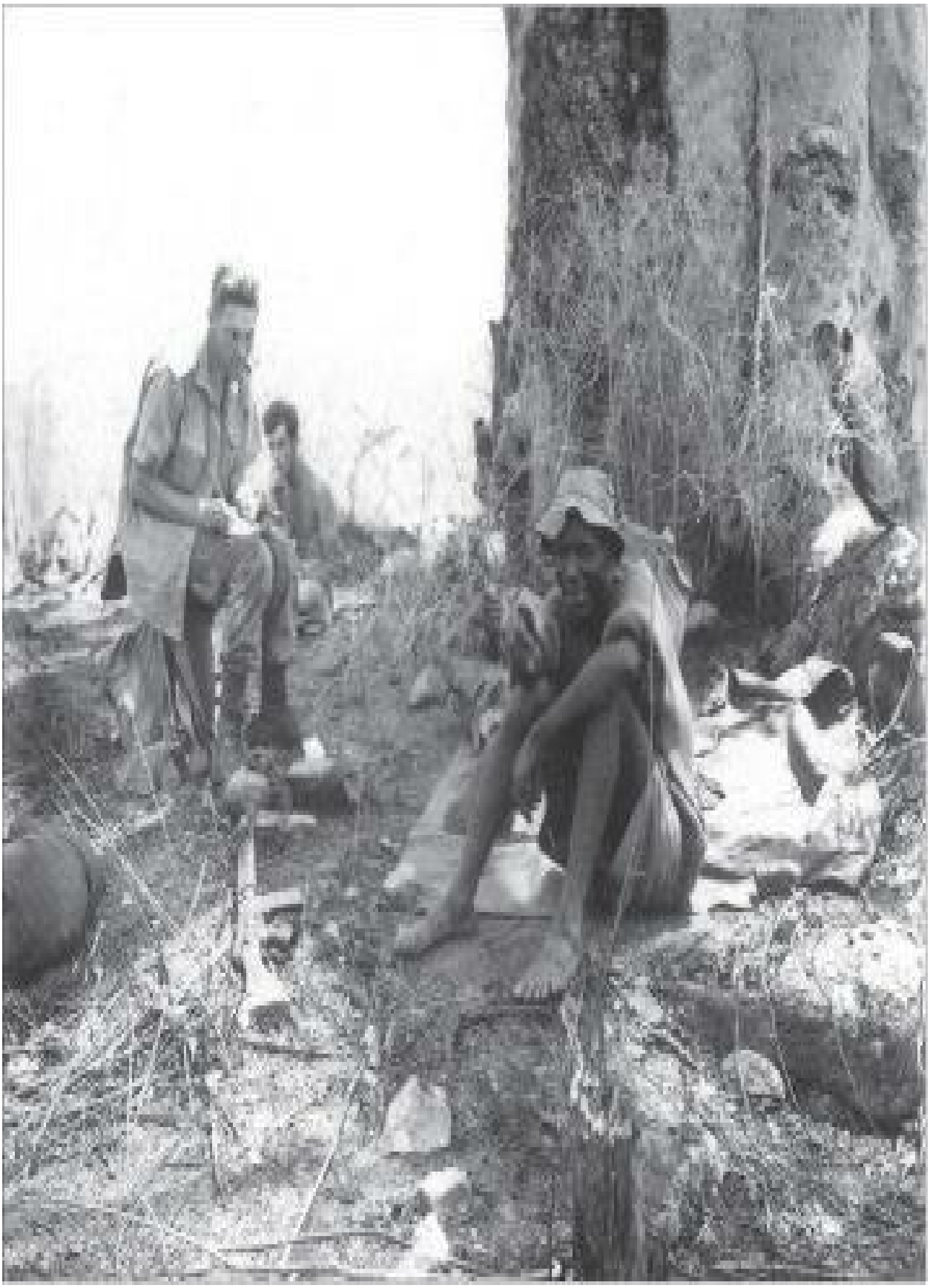
The third ZANU objective was entrusted to Peter Mlambo, Samson Goya, Jairos Chisadza (alias Dube) and Munorweyi Mbale, fresh from training in communist China. They were ordered to attack buildings in the centre of Salisbury on Saturday morning, 27 May. They entered Rhodesia on 26 May at Chirundu, hidden in a load of furniture and effects in a Stuttafords removals pantechnicon sent by the United States embassy in Lusaka to its consulate in Salisbury. ZANU had secured the lift from the driver, not knowing that he was one of a number of long-distance drivers who had been recruited by the Rhodesian SB after the killing of the pantechnicon driver on 18 September 1966 on Operation Yodei. He drove through the police roadblock at Makuti with his four passengers undetected. He then pulled into a lay-by 37 kilometres northwest of the small town of Karoi to await the arrival of the SB.


ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE
LUSAKA
SALISBURY
GWELO
Operation Pantechnicon
26 May 1967: 4 ZANU killed.
Major Connelly, SAS, wounded
20 May 1967: 3 captured.
JCC Glamour
19-26 May 1967
26 May 1967:
9 ZANU captured
Operation Glamour:
17 May 1967:
9 ZANU cadres crossed
Operations
Glamour & Pantechnicon
17-26 May 1967
0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200
Kilometres
R.T. Wood

At 2115 hours three SB officers and Major Dudley Coventry, Lieutenant K.J. Phillipson and corporals Joe Conway and Peter Allen of the SAS arrived in two Land Rovers. The pantechnicon driver told them that, five kilometres south of Makuti, he had been stopped by four ZANU men and at gunpoint forced to allow them to conceal themselves inside. As the seal on the side door was broken and movement was heard within, Coventry opened the door and called for surrender. Receiving no answer, he and Conway climbed into the van. Conway pulled some netting off a pile of crates and drew a volley of pistol fire. Coventry fired back before he and Conway jumped out of the vehicle. One of the trapped men appeared at the door and fired into the darkness. The Rhodesians responded by firing through the open door and the sides of the van, not realizing their four opponents were crouching on top of the piled-up furniture and crates.

After a 20-minute standoff a mortally wounded man crawled to the door and was dragged out by Coventry only to die within minutes. More calls to surrender drew fire. Another wounded insurgent appeared and collapsed at the door. Conway attempted to drag him out but the man was pulled back in. Under fire, Conway won the tug-of-war and flung his prisoner to the ground. The fire aimed at Conway wounded Coventry in the scrotum. The captured man expired shortly but lived long enough to confess what the group’s intention had been. Coventry ordered the SB men to fetch a CS-gas grenade from Karoi. While this was being done, the SAS continued to exchange fire with the two remaining insurgents while demanding their surrender. The CS grenade was delivered and thrown into the van. Although it was promptly tossed out, enough gas had been released to drive one man out of the doorway, firing as he went. Phillipson shot him dead. The Rhodesians then fired through the side of the van and waited for the gas to clear before entering.

Members of a PATU stick on an extended patrol in the Zambezi valley, 1967.
Photo Blue and Old Gold



A PATU stick leader questions a local during a Zambezi valley patrol. Photo Blue and Old Gold

They found one dead man. Coventry was evacuated to Salisbury general hospital while the van was searched. Lying among the 160 spent pistol cartridge cases were two opened copies of the Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong, open perhaps for inspiration. The SAS found four Tokarev pistols, four SKS self-loading rifles, an RPD light machine gun, 2,950 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition, 18 Soviet-made grenades, 25 slabs of Czechoslovakian TNT, 165 detonators, 30 feet of safety fuse, 30 detonating switches and 12 British anti-personnel mines. There were notes on how to prepare an ambush and to counter a surprise attack, a Chinese training manual, a Chinese cartoon book of heroic Chinese guerrilla feats against the Japanese, and a cache of food. The incident had taken some three to four hours. For his bravery Conway was awarded the Bronze Cross of Rhodesia.

Thereafter, incoming transport vehicles from Zambia had their goods compartments padlocked by Rhodesian customs officers and on arrival in Salisbury and Bulawayo were driven to special depots where they were unloaded under the watchful eyes of armed police. Another four terrorists were found and arrested on the road to Bulawayo in a Clan Transport pantechnicon after sounds within it had alerted a customs officer at Victoria Falls.

ZANU persisted, leading to the BSAP discovering a shipment of arms and ammunition concealed in a Stuttafords warehouse. A Stuttafords employee, Dennis Mangwana and his brother, Cephas, a member of a local ZANU cell, were betrayed by an informer and they and other members of the cell were arrested before the arms could be distributed to infiltrating terrorists. The subsequent investigation implicated Mrs Patricia Pearce, a ZANU sympathizer. Her son was working for ZANU in Lusaka, and had sent her a small package from Zambia with instructions to deliver it to an African near Hartley. What she did not know was that the African was working for the SB who discovered the package contained money to cover the expense of

importing the arms. The SB later arrested Pearce and charged her on 7 September 1971 in terms of the Unlawful Organizations Act for bringing money into Rhodesia to support ZANU, but on 21 January 1972 quietly dropped the charges against her and returned her passport.

Another vehicle-borne attempt involved an Express Motorways bus from Lusaka. It brought to Salisbury a coloured member of ZANU whose luggage contained a grenade concealed in a tin marked ‘Baked Beans’. His intention was to throw the grenade at Ian Smith when he stepped from of his car outside his office in Milton building. Although recruited personally by Herbert Chitepo, Bernard Mtumha and Noel Mukono, ZANU leaders in Lusaka, this would-be assassin betrayed himself by boasting. The SB promptly recruited him and sent him back to Lusaka as a double agent. His career was short, however, because the Zambian intelligence service intercepted his written reports to Salisbury. It was thought that he was executed and buried at a camp near Lusaka.

ZANU also inserted groups by boat. On Tuesday, 13 June 1967 they drove the four-man Uhuru and the six-man Tema Tema groups in two vehicles to Lusitu Boma close to the Zambezi river south of Chirundu. A third vehicle carried a steel boat capable of carrying four men. The two groups were issued with their weapons, equipment and £45 for the purchase of food and clothing. The two group leaders, Gilbert Mutasa of Uhuru and Comrade Gambara of Tema Tema, received an additional £100 each. The groups were then briefed. The Tema Tema group was ordered to march a daunting 475 kilometres on a southeasterly compass bearing until they reached the Inyanga area where they would attack isolated white-owned farms and murder the residents. The Uhuru group was given a similar compass bearing and told to attack white farms in the Rusape area and to destroy the bridges and culverts of the Salisbury–Umtali railway line.

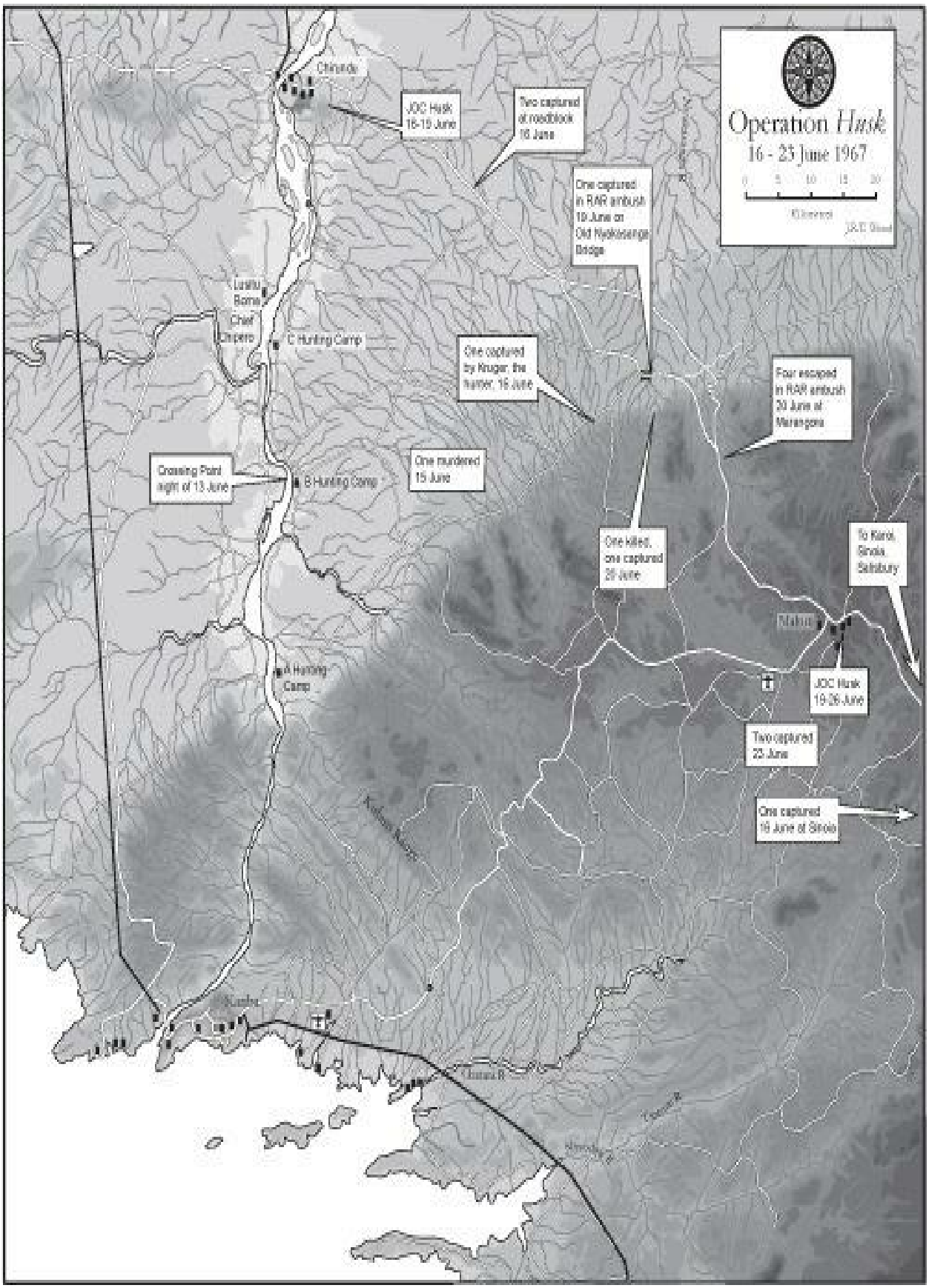
At nightfall both groups walked to the crossing point on the Zambezi, 26 kilometres upstream of Chirundu, adjacent to B hunting camp on the Rhodesian bank. A local fisherman ferried them across in the ZANU boat. Once on Rhodesian soil, the groups moved off separately into the night. Within a short distance Mutasa became separated from his three comrades. He abandoned his weapons and pack and headed off in a southeasterly

direction. His men, burdened by heavy packs, continued eastward, finding the going in the thick bush extremely tough. The Tema Tema group was likewise in difficulty. Indeed, by Thursday morning 15 June the Tema Tema group was unable to continue, despite the urging of Gambara, because they and their water supply were exhausted. Gambara and his political commissar, Chester Chiweshe, dropped their packs and rifles and left to search for water, carrying only their Tokarev pistols and two water bottles. Shortly after, in an attempt to murder him for his £145, Chiweshe shot and wounded Gambara who fired back and killed him. Gambara struggled on, only to be found staggering along a road the next morning, Friday, 16 June at 1030 hours by Kruger, a hunter from B camp. Kruger arrested him and handed him and his two pistols to the BSAP.

The leaderless three men of the Uhuru group, after covering only 17 kilometres, decided to desert and return to their Rhodesian homes. They abandoned their weapons and packs and set off. After a short way, Raphael Chimzinga left to make his way alone. John Mpofu and Lancelot Tayenga walked together to the Chirundu–Makuti road and, at 1000 hours that morning, 16 June, approached a roadblock manned by Detective Inspector Johne Fletcher and other SB members. They were arrested and soon admitted that they were part of a ten-man incursion. The BSAP responded by setting up a roadblock at the Caves motel near Sinoia and at 1400 hours Detective Inspector Michael McGuinness and Section Officer Smith stopped a Central African Road Services truck and arrested Chimzinga. This meant that only the Uhuru commander, Gilbert Mutasa, was outstanding. A JOC was established at Chirundu for Operation Husk with A Company 1RAR, a platoon of C Company 1RAR and an RRAF helicopter under command. Before then, by the evening of 16 June, the four remaining Tema Tema men were still making slow progress toward the Zambezi escarpment.

At 0100 hours on Monday, 19 June, Gilbert Mutasa, the missing ZANU Uhuru commander, walked into an ambush on the Nyakasanga bridge on the old Chirundu–Makuti road at the foot of the escarpment and was arrested by Lance-Corporal Francis of 3 Platoon A Company 1RAR. On Monday, 19 June the JOC moved to Makuti and was further reinforced by another C Company platoon, two Police Anti-Terrorist Unit (PATU) five-man sticks, a BSAP Support Unit troop, SB members, police reservists and a further

helicopter.


Operation Husk
16 - 23 June 1967
Chirundu
JOC Husk
16-19 June
Two captured at roadblock 16 June
One captured in RAR ambush 19 June on Old Makosenge Bridge
Four escaped in RAR ambush 20 June at Marangena
Lusitu Boma
Chief Chipepo
C Hunting Camp
One captured by Kruger the hunter, 16 June
Crossing Point night of 13 June
B Hunting Camp
One murdered 15 June
One killed, one captured 20 June
To Karoi, Sinoia Salisbury
Makuti
A Hunting Camp
JOC Husk 19-26 June
Two captured 22 June
One captured 19 June at Sinoia
Kanyemba
Zambezi R

Royal Rhodesia Regiment national servicemen gather at a helicopter LZ.

The four remaining men of the Tema Tema group were contacted at 0155 hours on Tuesday, 20 June when they were ambushed at the intersection of the old and new roads to Chirundu at Marangora. Their sudden appearance, however, caught Corporal Davison and his section of 3 Platoon by surprise and the terrorists escaped in the confusion. The follow-up action killed one and captured one. To assist in the hunt, two Provost aircraft were stationed at Kariba. That day ZANU headquarters in Lusaka issued a fanciful claim to have blown up a train carrying tobacco to South Africa.

On Friday, 23 June the last two Tema Tema men were captured and Operation Husk was declared over. The haul of weapons and equipment was one RPD machine gun, four AK and five SKS rifles, five pistols, nine magazines, 6,367 assorted rounds, 33 grenades, two boxes of detonators, 14 antipersonnel mines, 12 slabs of explosive, fuses, a pair of binoculars and ten haversacks.

A consequence of Operation Husk was that, in lieu of their compulsory annual training camps, the white territorial troops of 1 and 2RRR were deployed thereafter in rotation in company strength in the operational area. This was a significant move because these young men gained invaluable operational experience in a harsh environment.

ZANU perhaps were unaware of the fate of their men when they selected their next team. They chose as leader, Comrade Gwaku, a recent graduate of the Nanking Military Academy. His team comprised Comrade Daudanda, a Tanzanian-trained veteran of Operation Yodel, and three fellow Nanking trainees, Sanders Tarwirayi (alias Sithole), Patrick Mandizha and Comrade Mutusuku. Their task was to subvert the Urungwe Tribal Trust Land and terrorize the white farming areas north of Salisbury. On Thursday, 22 June they were driven via Lusitu Boma to Chirinde island, opposite the confluence of the dry Sharu river and 28 kilometres south of Chirundu. There Noel Mukono, ZANU’s operational director, issued weapons, bandoliers of

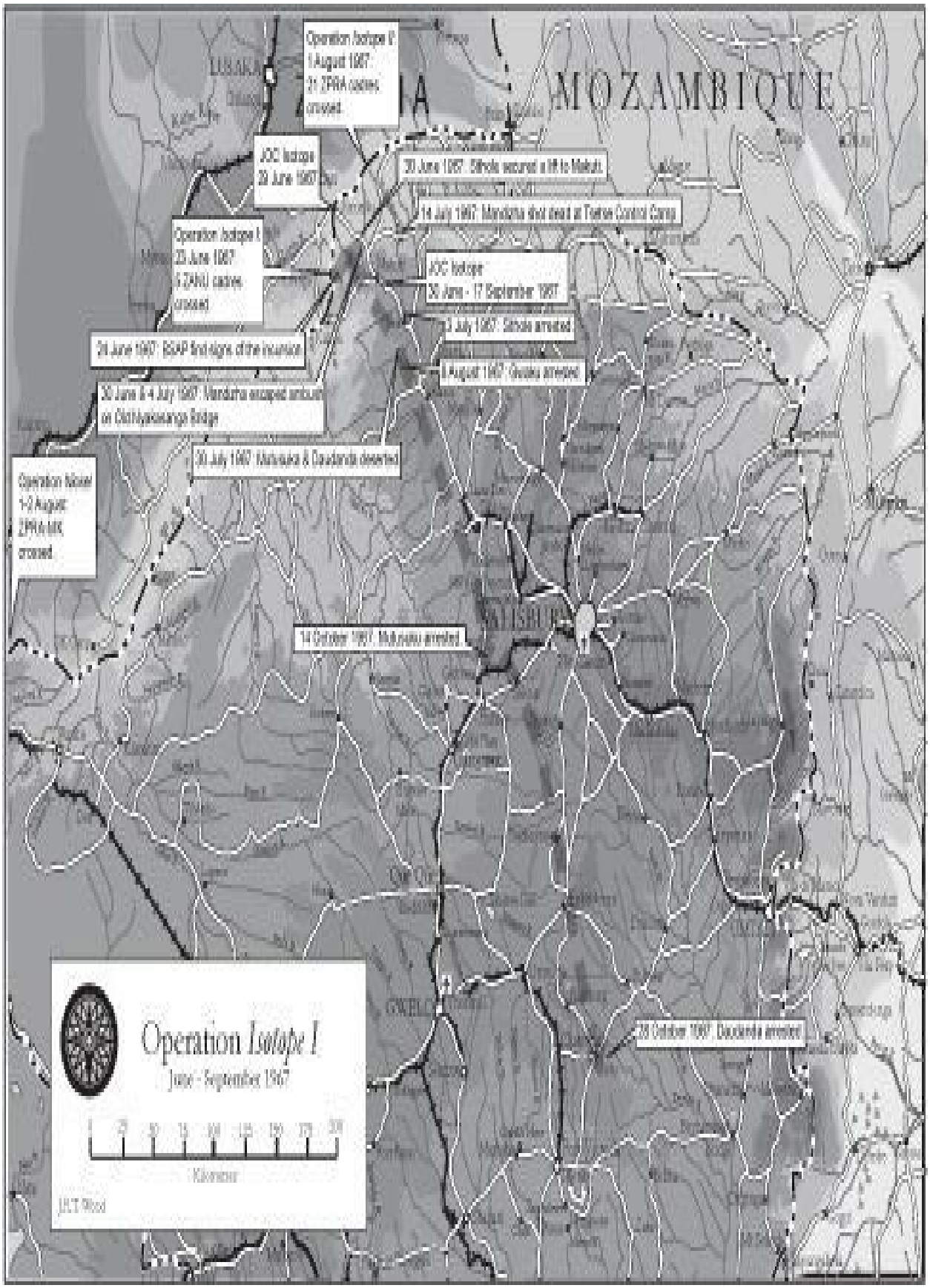
ammunition and £45 per man except for Gwaku who was given £100.

In the early hours of Friday, 23 June a local Zambian ferried the men across to Rhodesia in his canoe. They set off immediately and spent the day ten kilometres northeast of B hunting camp near the dry watercourse of the Rifa river. After they had moved on, the next day a BSAP patrol found three sets of tracks and a haversack buckle at the resting place and the hunt began. That night the ZANU team reached the base of the Zambezi escarpment and moved northeastward along it, suffering from a lack of water. Consequently, when they halted at 0400 hours on Sunday, 25 June to rest for the day, Gwaku ordered Mandizha and Sithole to drop their packs and rifles and search for water. When they had not returned by 2000 hours, Gwaku, Daudanda and Mutusuku moved on, leaving the missing men's packs and weapons in the camp. They had made such slow progress through the thick bush of the valley floor that they decided on Thursday, 29 June to move by day.

What they did not know was that their presence had just been confirmed by an army patrol finding a spent 7.62mm intermediate cartridge case in one of their resting places by the dry Rifa river close to the Zambezi escarpment. The response was the launching of Operation Isotope I with a JOC at Chirundu with A Company 1RAR, already in the area on border-control duties, an RRAF helicopter and BSAP personnel under command. The JOC moved to Makuti the next day, unaware that Gwaku, Daudanda and Mutusuku were climbing up the Rifa's course into the mountains of the escarpment. That night, 30 June, ten kilometres to the northeast of them, Mandizha, having lost Sithole during their search for water, walked into an RAR ambush on the old Nyakasanga bridge. He returned fire with his pistol before escaping. Farther to the northeast, Sithole reached the main Chirundu road where he obtained a lift to Makuti on a heavy lorry. When the driver refused to take him farther, he walked into the bush aiming to meet the road to Karoi 35 kilometres southeast of Makuti.

In the Zambezi valley on 14 July Operation Isotope I scored its second success. The twice-ambushed ZANU cadre, Patrick Mandizha, had spent Saturday night, 8 July with the African staff at the Rukomechi tsetse-fly research station on the Rukomechi river, 25 kilometres northeast of Makuti

below the escarpment. He had left the following morning for the Vuti African Purchase Area, southeast of Makuti. When he reappeared on 14 July, saying that the security force activity was too intense for him to get through, the African staff alerted a white tsetse ranger who shot and mortally wounded him. Three days later, when 2 Commando 1RLI and a troop of 3 Commando took over from A Company 1RAR, the undetected ZANU trio, Gwaku, Mutusuku and Daudanda, was approaching the Lynx mine, 15 kilometres south of Vuti village. There, with the assistance of locals, they lived in guano-filled caves until 30 July when Mutusuku and Daudanda deserted and Gwaku headed south. He was arrested on the nearby Doornhoek farm on 8 August but the other two had disappeared as JOC Isotope was preoccupied with dealing with a ZAPU incursion. Mutusuku and Daudanda reached the Zwimba Tribal Trust Land and remained there until parting on 8 October 1967. Six days later, Mutusuku was arrested by the BSAP on farm 6 in the Msengezi African Purchase Area, north of Gadzema. His equipment and weapon were found in a nearby cattle kraal. Daudanda was arrested on 28 October at his brother-in-law's kraal in the Gutu area. His weapon and equipment were later recovered. The operation was complete, and all the equipment and weapons, except for a Tokarev pistol, had been secured.


MOZAMBIQUE
Operation Isotope II
1 August 1967
2 ZPRA cadres crossed
JOC Isotope
28 June 1967
Operation Isotope I
23 June 1967
5 ZAPU cadres crossed
30 June 1967: Bhebe secured a lift to Mahuti
1st July 1967: Mandoma shot dead at Tremoe Control Camp
JOC Isotope
30 June - 17 September 1967
3 July 1967: Simoko arrested
6 August 1967: Gwaisi arrested
24 June 1967: BSAP first signs of the insurrection
30 June & 4 July 1967: Mandoma escaped ambush on Chirinyamurenga Bridge
30 July 1967: Matsuka & Daudanda deserted
Operation Nickel
1-2 August
ZPRA MR crossed
14 October 1967: Mukwasu arrested
Operation Isotope I
June - September 1967
Kilometres
J.R.T. Wood

4 Keesing’s Contemporary Archives, Keesing’s Publications Ltd, London, 20–27 May 1967, Vol. XVI, p. 22043.

CHAPTER SIX:

ZAPU'S 1967 'WANKIE' CAMPAIGN: OPERATIONS NICKEL AND ISOTOPE II, AND REINFORCEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA

As ZANU's series of minor incursions were fizzling out, the Rhodesian security forces would soon find themselves having to confront ZAPU's most ambitious incursions to date. This time ZAPU was reinforced by the South African government's principal foe, Oliver Tambo's South African African National Congress which had, like ZAPU, declared the 'armed struggle' in 1962.

ZAPU was anxious to wrest the initiative from ZANU. Like the SAANC, ZAPU also felt it necessary to convince the Soviet Union and the OAU, their mutual sponsors, that they were prepared to do more than sit and plan in Lusaka. Another spur was a fear that a current mission by Lord Alport, the former British high commissioner to the Federation, might produce the Anglo-Rhodesian settlement which could sound the death-knell for the hope of establishing an African nationalist government headed by Joshua Nkomo. The unrealistic aims of the incursions would provoke direct South African interference in Rhodesian affairs that would endure until 1980.

Another product was a military pact between ZAPU and the SAANC that would last beyond then. This alliance was not surprising because ZAPU and the ANC had much in common. Both their forces were aided, equipped and trained by the Soviet Union, its surrogates and allies, and thus enjoyed a common approach to overthrowing their countries' regimes. David Moore attributes the alliance in part to pressure from the idealistic aspirations of ranks of the two movements steeped in the Marxist dialectic imparted during their training and their eagerness to support the armed struggle. There was

also an ethnic overtone because ZAPU drew its support, in the main, from the Zulu-derived Ndebele-speaking people of Matabeleland.[5]

ZAPU had 90 men available at Ndhlovu's farm off the Mumbwa road outside Lusaka, trained at Boghari in Algeria and Kongwa camp in Tanzania. On 20 July ZAPU sent 29 of them to join 52 men of Tambo's armed wing, the Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), in a tented camp on Dube Phiri's farm 32 kilometres from Lusaka on the King Edward mine road. Some of the MK cadres had also been trained in Algeria and Tanzania, others in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, Egypt, Czechoslovakia and East Germany.

The 81 men were given ten days' pre-deployment training in map reading, demolition and combat tactics to familiarize them with each other's methods. ZAPU leaders, Akim Ndhlovu and Dumiso Dabengwa, and the SAANC's Oliver Tambo and his military leader, Joe Modise (later minister of defence in the South African government of Nelson Mandela) lectured them. The MK's medical officer, Dr Randeree, a South African Indian, examined them and declared two of the ZAPU men unfit. The men were then issued small amounts of Rhodesian currency and kit which included boots with distinctive 'figure-of-8' soles.

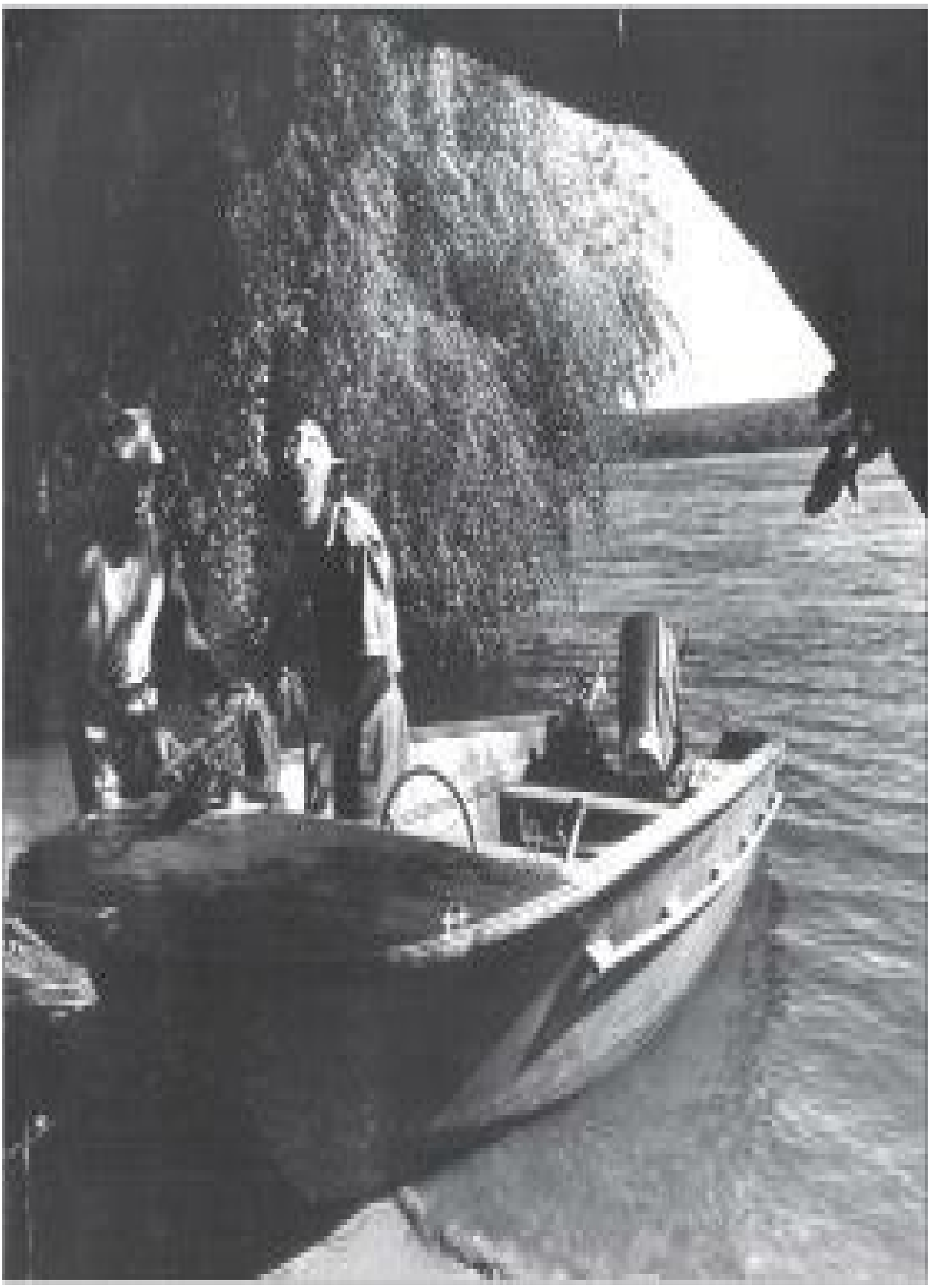
The objective of James Chikerema of ZAPU was to subvert and terrorize areas of northern Mashonaland, the Midlands, and northern and western Matabeleland. As president Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana refused to allow foreign forces to base themselves on his soil, Oliver Tambo's aim was to create, through subversion, a secret infiltration route through Rhodesia to the Limpopo river and into South Africa.

On Sunday, 30 July the first unit comprising 21 ZAPU men drew weapons and was divided into an eleven-man A section, led by Comrade Tichawona, and the ten-man B section. At 1900 hours they were driven in three vehicles to the Zambian Zambezi escarpment where they were issued with packs, food, ammunition and equipment and were ordered to seek recruits in Sipolilo but not to commit any acts of terrorism until they had secured local support. As they were assured there were no security forces in the area, the men were not told what to do if they encountered them. They intended to cross the Zambezi that night, 30–31 July, but were delayed by vehicle trouble. On Monday, 31 July they were dropped in the Kabwatu area and

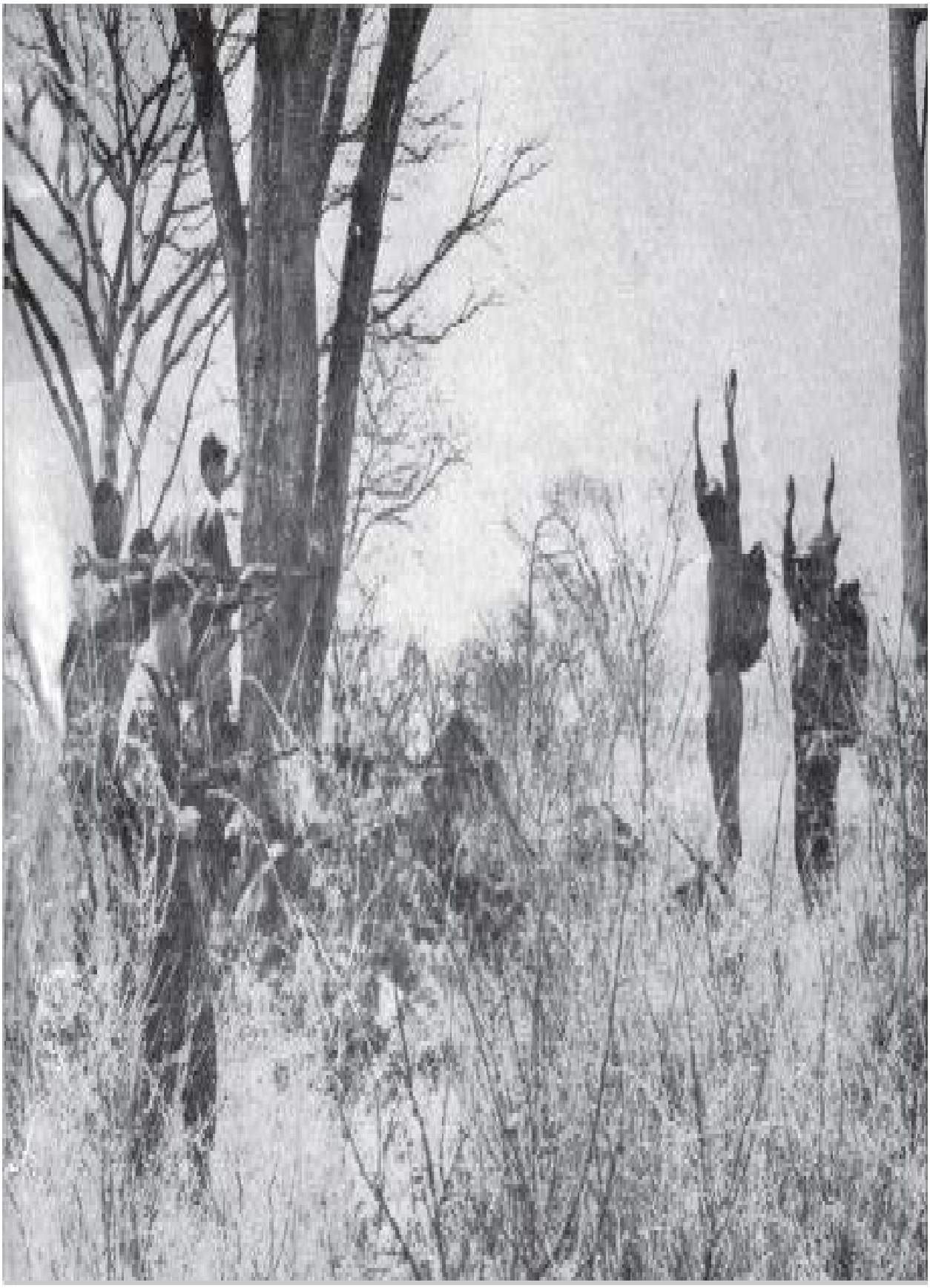
walked to the crossing point where a Zambian boatman and his canoe waited for them. At 0100 hours on Tuesday, 1 August, taking five trips to get across, they landed in the area of D hunting camp, 25 kilometres downstream from Chirundu near the mouth of the Rukomechi river. They moved off together in a southerly direction. In the dark, Comrade Chanetsa disappeared and was believed to have returned to Zambia. At dawn they halted and rested before resuming their march at 1800 hours even though their water supply was exhausted.

John Dube of ZAPU and his MK deputy, Lennox Tjali (alias Mjojo Mxwaku, later a major-general in the South African National Defence Force) commanded the second unit, the 47-man Luthuli group (13 ZAPU and 34 MK cadres). David Madziba of ZAPU and MK's Andries Motsepe led the third, the 23-man Lobengula group (14 ZAPU and nine MK men). Dressed in civilian clothes, both teams travelled by rail and road to Drummond Park farm in the Livingstone area. On arrival they were issued with olive-green or khaki uniforms, packs, small amounts of Rhodesian and South African currency, explosives, Soviet AK-47 and SKS rifles, RPD light machine guns, Czechoslovakian M25 sub-machine guns, rocket launchers and 300 rounds of ammunition each. Chris Hani, the political commissar of the Luthuli group (later president of the South African Communist Party), however, objected when he and the others were given one magazine only. Oliver Tambo intervened and persuaded Joe Modise, the MK commander, to supply an additional magazine and grenades. Each group was given a transistor radio to listen to Rhodesian news broadcasts, and the commanders were issued with compasses and rudimentary maps.

An RAR sentry watches and listens for signs of the enemy, Operation Nickel, 1967. Photo Masodja



7 Platoon C Company 1RAR prepares their boat prior to a patrol into the Devil’s gorge. Photo Masodja



Two ZAPU insurgents surrender, Operation Nickel, 1967. Photo Masodja

An RAR motorized patrol in the Kavira forest, Operation Nickel, 1967. Photo Masodja

Oliver Tambo and Joe Modise, and ZAPU's Akim Ndhlovu and Dumiso Dabengwa briefed the two units separately. Madziba's Lobengula group was ordered to establish a base in the Nkai area, 100 kilometres northwest of Gwelo, with the assistance of the members of the Zimbabwe Church of Orphans, and then attack the white farms in the Midlands. They were promised reinforcement from Zambia but were not provided with any means of communicating with ZAPU headquarters in Lusaka.

Dube's Luthuli group was told to base themselves in the Tjolotjo Tribal Trust Land at the junction of the Nata and Tegwani rivers, 180 kilometres northwest of Bulawayo and close to the Botswanan border, and to recruit locals and attack white farms and government installations, particularly police stations.

Thereafter, the MK elements in both groups would form five units and make their way to South Africa to subvert Sekhukhuneland (then a 'Bantustan', i.e. native reserve, between Middelburg and Pietersburg), the Transkei and Zululand as preparation for a general uprising in South Africa. Two coloured MK cadres, Paul Petersen and George Driver, were given independent missions in Cape Town.

During the evening of 30 July, accompanied by Oliver Tambo and Joe Modise, both groups were driven to a gorge on the Zambezi, downstream of Victoria Falls where Modise had reconnoitred a crossing point. However, on the short march to the gorge one cadre accidentally discharged his weapon, prompting Hani to insist the crossing be aborted. The party returned to their vehicles and were driven to the formidable, steep-sided Batoka gorge, 17 kilometres downstream of Victoria Falls. This change of plan fortuitously avoided a Rhodesian ambush on the southern bank at Modise's proposed crossing point. The ambush had been set on the advice of Detective Inspector Michael McGuinness who had been alerted to a possible incursion, through

Rhodesian intelligence penetration, of ZAPU.

The groups climbed down Batoka gorge during the night of 1–2 August and crossed the strongly flowing river in Soviet inflatable rubber dinghies. At dawn they rested on the Rhodesian bank before climbing the steep southern lip of the gorge in the late afternoon and beginning a southwesterly march through the sparsely populated Wankie Tribal Trust Land. Their arrival was undetected because the security forces ignored the gorge as it was deemed too difficult to cross. The reality was that the scarcity of troops meant that almost all the Zambezi river, flowing through an uninhabited wilderness, was unguarded.

The crossing was relatively easy but August is the middle of the dry season and water is always scarce in the arid, hot, thorny bushveld beyond the river. All three infiltrating groups had ahead of them vast, uninhabited or sparsely inhabited areas where fresh human tracks command instant attention.

In northern Mashonaland that day, Wednesday, 2 August, the first ZAPU unit, reduced to 20 men, set off across the Urungwe controlled hunting area heading for the Zambezi escarpment 50 kilometres away. They soon suffered from a lack of water and food. At dawn on Thursday, 3 August they camped some 12 kilometres north of Marangora and sent out a water party. Comrades Mporuri, Mulenga, Khamba, Nyakudya, Chirawu, Chinamasa, Murimi and Mpatsi discarded their packs, took their weapons and set out. They split up and went in all directions in search of water and got lost. Mpatsi told the BSAP shortly after that, not wanting to fight, they had deserted.

At 0700 hours on Friday, 4 August the remaining 12 of the first unit still camped north of Marangora, dispatched another eight men to find water. Comrades Nyoni, Nyiwa, Munda, Mlambo, Maraha, Mareki, Jairos and Mutopo dropped their packs, took their weapons and headed southeastward toward the Rukomechi tsetse-fly research station some 25 kilometres away. Nyoni and Jairos promptly deserted, leaving six to go on. At 1800 hours, 12 kilometres west of the research station, they found an unattended Land Rover belonging to a tsetse-control officer called Vale. As it was carrying a 44-gallon drum of water, they drove off in it. Half an hour later, a sentry from Lieutenant W.M. Thompson’s 8 Troop 2 Commando 1RLI heard approaching footfalls on the Rukomechi road just north of the Chemutsi dam.

He challenged and arrested Mpatsi, the deserter from the first water party. The interrogation of Mpatsi revealed the crossing of 21 men. Operation Isotope II was the response with the deployment of C Company 1RAR to Makuti. Flying Officer 'Prop' Preller Geldenhuys and Pilot Officer Ken Law flew an armed Percival Provost of 4 Squadron RRAF to Kariba to join two Alouette III helicopters of 7 Squadron. Geldenhuys took command of the air effort. Shortly thereafter Kariba airport was designated forward airfield 2 (FAF 2) and would remain active until 1980.

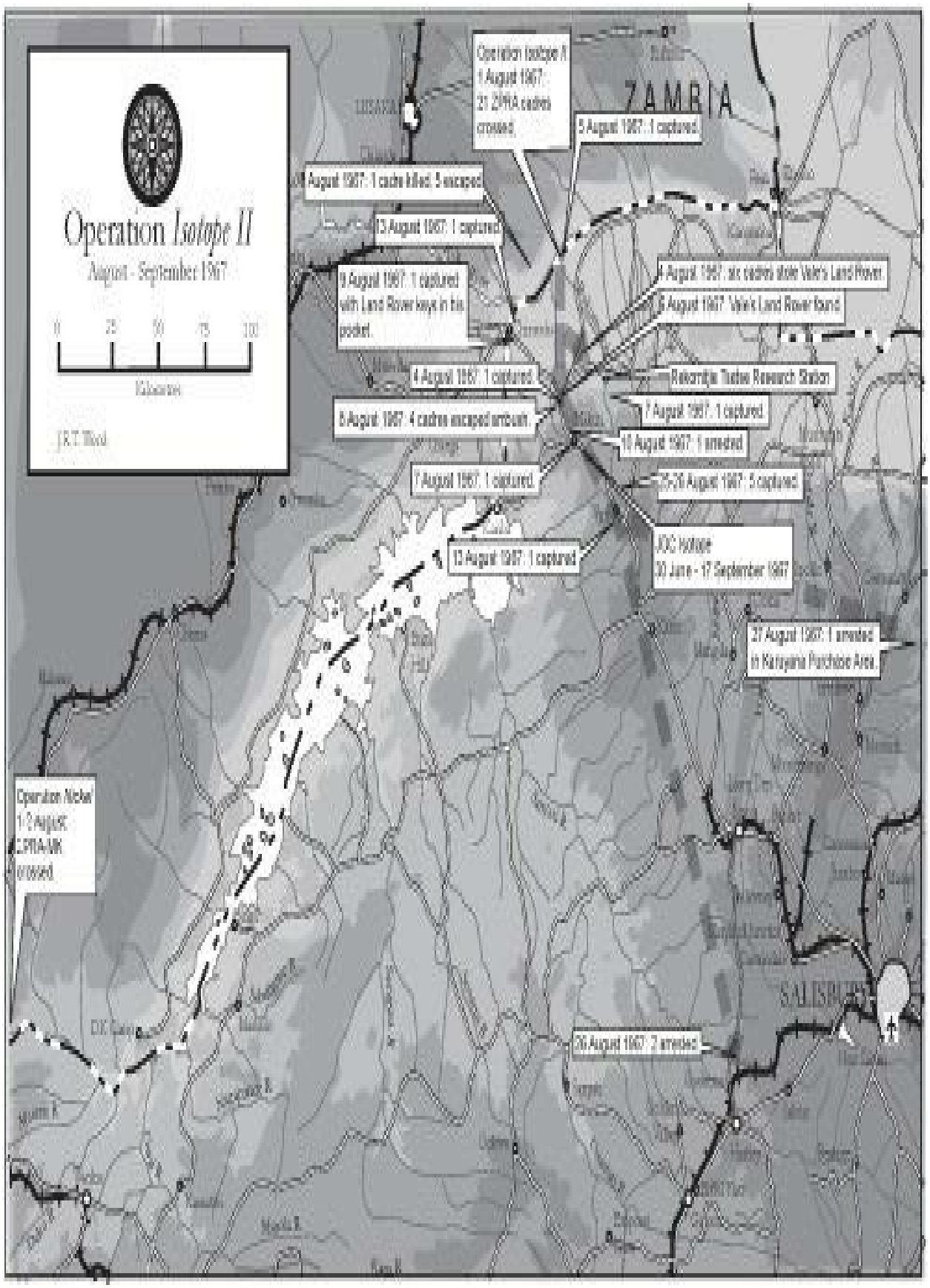
At 0800 hours the next morning, 5 August, Nyoni, the deserter from the second ZAPU water party, was captured alone and unarmed by a white hunter near D hunting camp at the first unit's crossing point. On Sunday, 6 August an army patrol found Vale's Land Rover abandoned at the junction of the Chirundu and Mana Pools roads. Tracks led to the terrorists' deserted base camp north of Marangora where weapons, ammunition, equipment and 13 packs were found. The search of the area the next day yielded Nyoni's discarded weapon and equipment two kilometres north of the camp. At 2000 hours Mulenga of the first water party was caught by the BSAP in a tsetse-control compound in the Makuti area. At 2240 hours the SB arrested Mporuri, also of the first water party, when he sought food from the Jumbo café at Makuti.

Undetected in northwestern Matabeleland, the Luthuli and Lobengula groups were still together, marching southwestward by night and resting by day. They aimed to skirt the coal-mining town of Wankie (now Hwange) and seek what they presumed to be the sanctuary of the vast Wankie national park and its adjacent controlled hunting areas. They did not understand that scarcity of water there would narrow any search to the established waterholes and that the absence of human habitation would make their footprints stand out, particularly as they were wearing boots with distinctive figure-of-8 soles.

Their immediate problem was that on Friday, 4 August they had lost contact with their scouts, Gawawo, Don Ncube, Nkonzo, Eric Nduma and Malama. Sent to find the missing men, Goodman Mhlauli (alias Rashidi) and Wilson Nqose (alias Msweli, later a major-general of the South African National Defence Force) also got lost. Unable to find the main body, the seven missing men headed west for Botswana where Mhlauli, Nqose and Gawawo were

detained and Don Ncube died of natural causes. The remaining three, Nkonzo, Eric Nduma and Malama, returned to the Wankie national park, only to be killed there in early September.

With some assistance from a sympathizer, the Luthuli and Lobengula groups marched 40 kilometres to the Matetsi river bridge on the main Victoria Falls–Bulawayo road, and then to the railway line running parallel to the road 12 kilometres to the south during the night of 5–6 August. In the course of the march, two members, Peter Tdladi and Alfred Scott, were lost. Tdladi had been sent back to retrieve his dropped weapon and Scott had fallen asleep during a halt and had been left behind. The remaining 61 men marched 30 kilometres until, early on Monday, 7 August, they camped by a pool in the Deka river, 13 kilometres west of Wankie town. They spent the day there, confidently washing their clothes and shooting a kudu to provide themselves with their first good meal in a week. Later ZAPU headquarters in Lusaka would claim that the men had spent weeks there wreaking damage to the coal industry. They did not. That night the Lobengula group departed for the Nkai Tribal Trust Land 160 kilometres to the east-southeast while the Luthuli group moved in a southerly direction through the Wankie national park, aiming for the northwestern end of the Tjolotjo Tribal Trust Land some 200 kilometres away.


Operation Isotope II
August - September 1967
0
25
50
75
100
Kilometres
J.R.T. Wood
ZAMBIA
Operation Isotope II
1 August 1967:
21 ZIPRA cadres
crossed.
5 August 1967: 1 captured.
2 August 1967: 1 cadre killed, 5 escaped.
3 August 1967: 1 captured.
9 August 1967: 1 captured with Land Rover keys in his pocket.
4 August 1967: six cadres stole Viele's Land Rover.
6 August 1967: Viele's Land Rover found.
4 August 1967: 1 captured.
Rekomitjie Tsetse Research Station
8 August 1967: 4 cadres escaped ambush.
7 August 1967: 1 captured.
10 August 1967: 1 arrested.
7 August 1967: 1 captured.
25-26 August 1967: 5 captured.
13 August 1967: 1 captured.
JOC Hotaze
30 June - 17 September 1967
27 August 1967: 1 arrested in Kariyania Purchase Area.
Operation Nickel
1-2 August
ZIPRA-UK
crossed.
SALISBURY
26 August 1967: 2 arrested.

Operation Isotope II enjoyed mixed success on Tuesday, 8 August after a section of 9 Platoon C Company 1RAR had followed tracks across a neck of sand to a small wooded island in the Zambezi near E hunting camp and the confluence of the Nyakasanga river. On reaching the island at 1045 hours Private Jonah, the leading scout, spotted Tichawona, the leader of ZAPU's A section, ten metres ahead. Called upon to surrender, Tichawona cocked his weapon and was shot dead by Corporal John, the section leader. The five other ZAPU cadres responded with heavy automatic fire, forcing the section back to the riverbank. John radioed for reinforcements. Thirty minutes later, reinforced by six RAR soldiers, John led an attack on the island but the response was a single tossed grenade. RAR Lieutenant Rodney A.F. Gardiner arrived in a helicopter with four more men. A search of the area yielded the body of Tichawona, one SKS rifle, a grenade and some equipment. The five survivors escaped detection by hiding in the river and later headed back toward the escarpment.

That night at 2245 hours, ambushing the old Chirundu road at Hell's Gate, 13 Troop 3 Commando 1RLI heard footsteps approaching them. Sergeant Madgwick challenged, fired a flare and had two instant light grenades thrown. The grenades failed to ignite, giving the four infiltrators time to take cover under the bank of the road before the flare lit the area and a fusillade of shots followed. Unhurt, the four fled seven minutes later when the troop commander drove up. Their tracks were followed the next morning but were lost after five miles.

The search for the scattered ZAPU elements was rewarded when, at 1000 hours on Wednesday, 9 August, Comrade Nyiwa of the second ZAPU water party was surprised on the main road near Chirundu and arrested by Sergeant Parratt, an RLI vehicle mechanic, and his driver, Trooper van Niekerk. They handed him over to the BSAP at Chirundu. He was unarmed but had the keys to Vale's Land Rover in his pocket.

The same day, 9 August, in northwestern Matabeleland, the Nkai-bound ZAPU-MK Luthuli group crossed the Lukozi river where it was traversed by the loop in the railway line south of Wankie town. The next day, however, the missing Alfred Scott sealed their fate and that of the Lobengula group.

Lost, he had wandered close to Lukhosi mission, adjacent to the main Bulawayo– Victoria Falls road. His presence was reported to the BSAP who soon found his cached pack and instituted a manhunt, reinforced by Lieutenant Graham Noble and his 10 Platoon D Company 1RAR who were passing through Wankie homeward bound from a border-control stint on Operation Lettuce. Noble's formidable Platoon Warrant Officer Wurayayi and six privates quickly ran Scott to ground. He had lost his rifle but was armed with two grenades. He confessed that he belonged to the MK but claimed his group comprised six men only. Later he would guide Captain Anthony Grace of 2RRR back to the crossing point in the Batoka gorge.

Police dog Leon survived for six weeks in rugged bush of Tjolotjo, Matabeleland, after getting separated from his handler during a contact with terrorists in August 1967. Photo Blue and Old Gold

The guerrillas' giveaway: the telltale figure-of-8 boot tread.

The reaction was swift. By the next morning, Friday, 11 August, the Commander of 1 Brigade, Brigadier Robert Prentice, initiated Operation Nickel and ordered Major Walter Godwin of 1 (Independent) Company RRR to establish a JOC at Wankie airfield. Flight Lieutenant Douglas Butler designated the airfield FAF 1 (which would endure until 1980). The next day, flying officers Geldenhuys and Chris Weinmann flew in two Provosts and Murray Hofmeyr and Michael Grier two Alouette III helicopters. Two Police Reserve Air Wing aircraft were put on standby. Godwin immediately ordered the aircraft and a platoon of his white national servicemen to assist Noble's men in scouring the dry bushveld. The capture of Scott quickly assumed international importance because the deputy commissioner of police (crime and security), William Crabtree, telephoned his counterpart in South Africa, Major-General Hendrik van den Bergh, the director of the Bureau of State Security and close confidant of Vorster (both having been interred at Koffiefontein during the Second World War as suspected pro-Nazi sympathisers). Told of the MK incursion, van den Bergh responded with an offer of police reinforcements, weapons and transport. Crabtree passed this on to his superiors, the acting commissioner of police, Mervyn Harris (F.E. Barfoot, the commissioner, being ill with brain cancer) and Ken Flower, the director of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization. The offer was considered by the OCC but not recommended because the Rhodesian army felt no need for reinforcements. Ian Smith and the cabinet, however, received it enthusiastically. Smith noted that the South Africans were being careful by merely offering assistance with policing and not military aid that would attract international wrath. Vorster sanctioned the offer and ordered the deployment of South African Police (SAP) riot units, helicopters and seven Cessna 185 aircraft from 42 Army Air Reconnaissance Squadron at Potchefstroom. Having been attested into the SAP, the Cessna crews flew their aircraft to the RRAF base at Thornhill on 6 September. Their reconnaissance and support operations in the Wankie, Victoria Falls and Kariba areas for the rest of the year were given a variety of codenames:

Pyramid, Ermine, Overtone, Jezebel, Robust, Daffodil and Meltone.

Whatever the Rhodesian army thought, the deployment of the paramilitary South African policemen was not entirely inappropriate because border control was already one of their functions. The reality was that the only regular servicemen available to Vorster were his policemen because the South African army comprised an instructor corps training national servicemen and the part-time Citizen Force (territorial) units whose personnel could not be committed to a foreign adventure. There was a precedent for sending policemen: General Smuts had deployed 300 of them to South West Africa in March 1939 in anticipation of trouble on Hitler's birthday. The Rhodesian commanders welcomed the South African helicopters but the policemen were for some time not of a great value, given that their normal environment, with its concepts of minimum force, was so very different from that of the soldier. Vorster's decision, however, pleased the SAP commissioner, Lieutenant-General Johannes Martinus Keevy, because it gave his men an opportunity to gain experience in counter-insurgency warfare. The SAP would exploit Rhodesia for this purpose until 1974, using the Rhodesian army's scarce training resources. The SAP replaced its companies every three months with mostly untrained men. This drew criticism of their performance in the field, not all of it justified and much of it simply inter-force rivalry. One criticism was that, unlike army officers, the police officers rose through the ranks and were well into their 30s before they were commissioned. This made them nearly 20 years older than their troops, which was a physical handicap in the tough conditions of the Zambezi valley where they would be stationed. Whatever their shortcomings, the SAP filled vital gaps along the Zambezi river which otherwise would have required the mobilizing of Rhodesian territorial and reserve forces with the consequent effect on the economy and the morale of the civilian population. When the SAP personnel were withdrawn in 1974–1975, their presence was sorely missed.

Operation Isotope II enjoyed further success on Thursday, 10 August, when an army patrol found two weapons and some ammunition close to the Rukomechi road and the Chemutsi dam. Then at 2200 hours an off-duty policeman arrested Mlambo, of the second ZAPU water party, when he attempted to hitch a lift five kilometres from Makuti on the Kariba road. Two days later, an African plain-clothes constable spotted Chimborora on an

island in the Zambezi opposite the Chirundu sugar estates' pumphouse, persuaded him to return to the Rhodesian bank and arrested him. Chimborora and his companion, Jairos, had intended to cross back to Zambia on the previous evening but only Jairos was successful. He would return to Rhodesia on Operation Excess in June 1968.

While Major Walter Godwin had been setting up JOC Nickel, John Dube's Luthuli group was marching even deeper into the Wankie national park. Closer at hand was David Madziba's Lobengula group, camping three kilometres south of Pongoro siding, 21 kilometres south of Wankie town. On Friday evening, 11 August, they moved to a ridge overlooking the siding where Paul Petersen set off on his assignment in South Africa. He walked six kilometres eastward to Tshantanda siding to board a train but at dawn was arrested by an African railway security guard. He was taken to the police station at Dett but was not searched. Consequently, he drew his pistol and wounded Corporal Tazuwinga of railway security and escaped on a bicycle. Next, he stole a car and, evading roadblocks, drove to Bulawayo.

The Lobengula group had followed in Scott's wake to seek supplies from the labour compound at Tshantanda siding. Finding the compound deserted, they rested nearby and watched the BSAP members tracing the movements of Petersen a few hundred metres away. What the group did not know was that an African civilian tracker had found their tracks at Pongoro siding where they had crossed over the railway line. The tracker was leading an eleven-man follow-up team of Captain Peter Hosking, the second in command of A Company 1RAR, comprising seven RAR soldiers, BSAP Section Officer Barry Tiffin and patrol officers P.R. Hopkins and A.J. Duguid.

The Lobengula group recrossed the railway line and headed southeast for eight kilometres to the Inyantue river where they found a pool of water, three kilometres south of the railway line. In the early hours of Sunday, 13 August they camped in the dense bush of a horseshoe-shaped ridged spur on the east bank of the Inyantue. They lit a fire, cooked and ate a bushbuck they had shot, posted sentries and went to sleep.

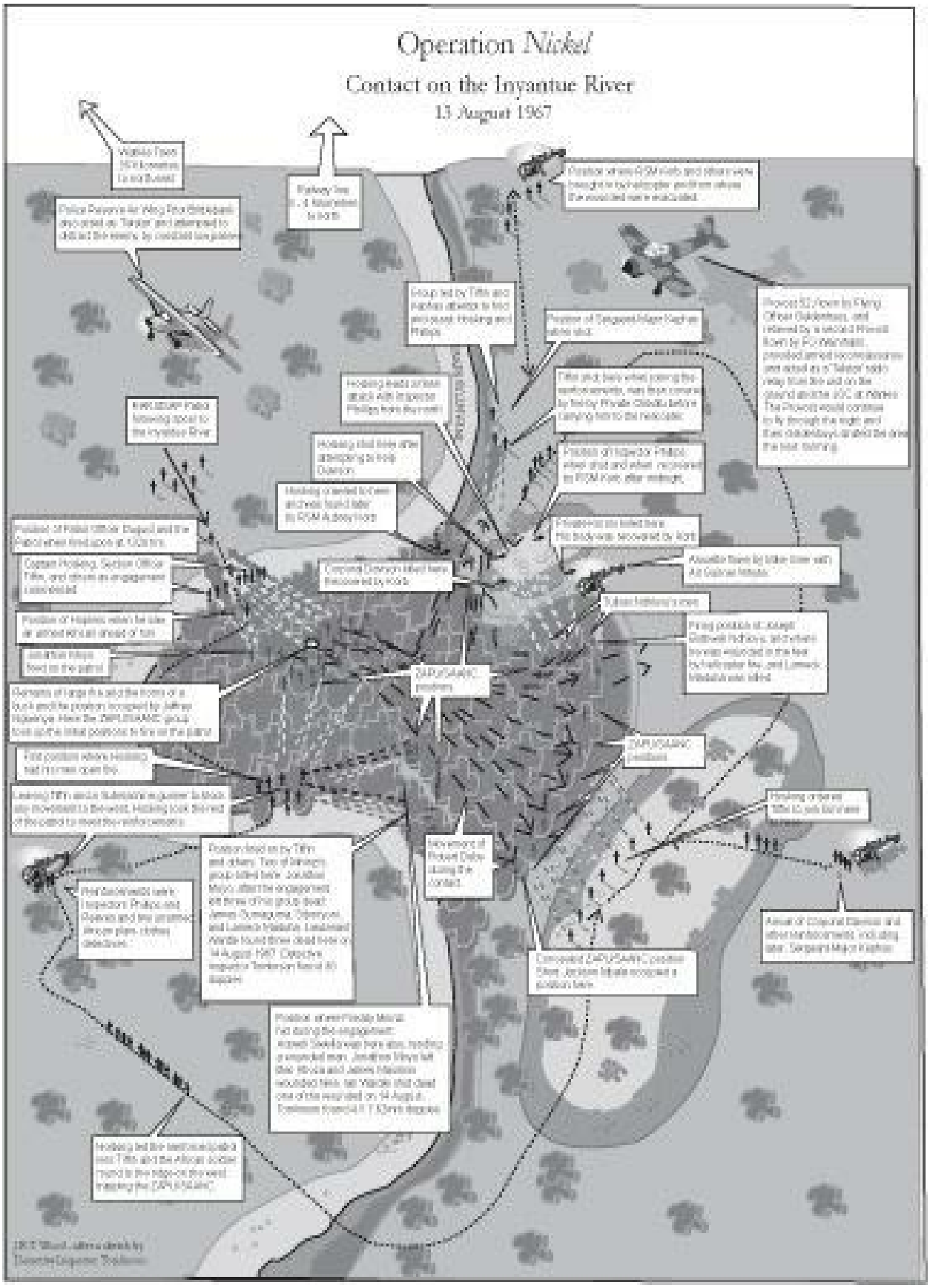
Following the tracks of five of them, their pursuers caught up with the Lobengula group at 1320 hours. Unaware they were being watched by 21 well-armed and determined men, Tiffin and the tracker led Hosking and the

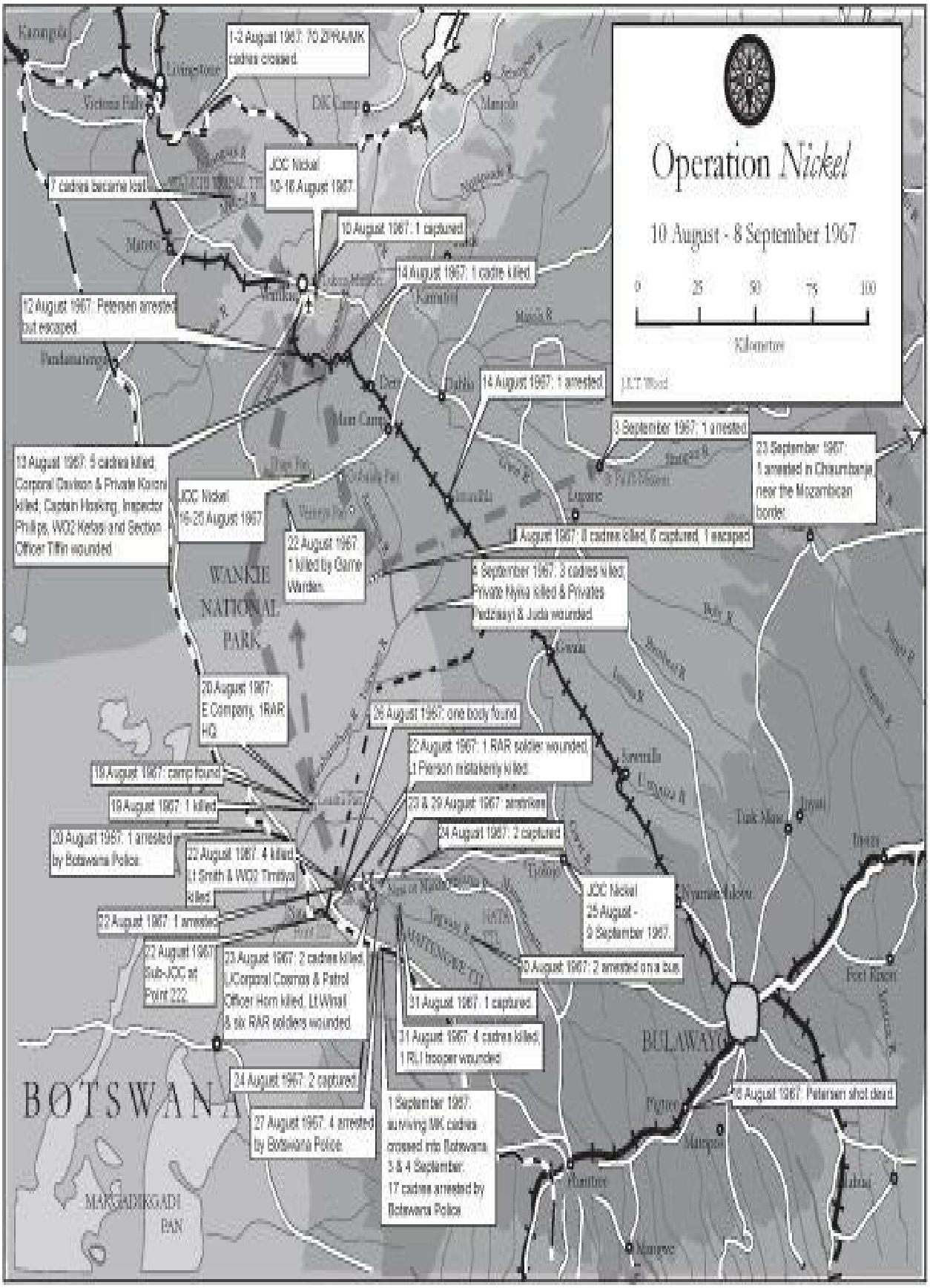
others into the bush to examine a resting place. At that moment they were shot at. They fired back and skirmished a short way into the bush.

For the rest of the afternoon and into the night the Lobengula group fought off Hosking's outnumbered force. What forced them to stand their ground under the trees were the two circling Provost aircraft and the arrival of the two armed Alouette helicopters carrying reinforcements. To the amazement of Hosking, instead of the troops he asked for, the first helicopter brought in Inspector Frederick Phillips, the BSAP member in charge at Wankie, Detective Inspector Reeves and two unarmed plain-clothes African detectives. The second helicopter, however, carried Corporal Davison and four RAR privates. The reinforcements emboldened Hosking to attempt a flanking attack. Heavy fire at short range, however, killed Davison and Private Koroni and wounded Hosking and Phillips. Phillips was hit in the head, incapacitating him for life. Hosking's femoral artery was severed but a clot formed quickly and saved his life. Knocked onto his back and losing his rifle, he dragged himself down the short grass of the ridge into dense vegetation by the dry riverbed. He lay there unarmed and with an unserviceable radio. Tiffin and Sergeant-Major Kefasi attempted to rescue Hosking but both fell wounded. Private Simon Chikafu covered Tiffin with fire and later pulled him into cover. This left the troops leaderless and pinned down by fire. The helicopter pilot, Michael Grier, landed so that his technician, Sergeant Robert C. Whyte, could deliver a radio, only to see him trapped in cover by heavy fire.

JOC Nickel dispatched Regimental Sergeant-Major Aubrey Korb 1RAR to take command. The unarmed PRAW aircraft flown by Police Reservist Brittlebank and the two Provosts kept diving in to distract the Lobengula group while Korb organized the recovery of the casualties. The Provosts were unable to strafe because of the close proximity of the troops to the enemy. Whyte retreated to safety. Kefasi was picked up. Chikafu carried the injured Tiffin to a helicopter, and slowly the rest of the living and dead were brought back under sporadic fire. Eventually, with only Phillips and Hosking missing, Korb placed incoming RAR reinforcements in ambush positions to contain the Lobengula group but, while the light lasted, any movement drew fire from the unseen enemy. At midnight Korb finally took the risk and fired an Icarus parachute flare to find the two missing men. Hosking called him over

and told him where Phillips lay. Both wounded men were carried back to the railway line three kilometres away where at 0100 hours a railway trolley took them to Wankie. Hosking at least was lucky because waiting for them at Wankie hospital was Dr Klugman, the local surgeon, who was used to dealing with coalminers' wounds. He saved Hosking's leg but could do little for the brain-damaged Phillips.


Operation Nickel
Contact on the Inyantue River
13 August 1967
Wankie Town (Not to scale)
Railway line
Police Reserve Air Wing Provost (call sign 'Tango') was used as 'Target' and attempted to distract the enemy by constant low passes
Position where ROM vehicle and other vehicles were left by helicopter and from where the wounded were evacuated
Group led by Tiffin and Hopkins attempt to trap and outwit Hosking and Phillips
Position of Sergeant Adam Kaplan when shot
Provost 52 (Crew Lt Kemp, Officer Cadet Mason, and manned by a retired Rhodesian Air Force Flight Lieutenant, provided armed reconnaissance and acted as a 'Target' with relay to the ground troops and to the Operational Headquarters (OC at Wankie). The Provost would continue to fly through the night and then intermittently, during the first few days of the hunt, training.
Hosking dead in area of Ash Inspector Phillips' body was found
Tiffin and party when joining the reinforcements, was then joined by him by Private Chibatu before carrying him to the helicopter
Hosking shot three times after attempting to help Duerson
Position of Inspector Phillips when shot and when recovered by ROM crew, after midnight
Hosking crawled to Owen and was found later by ROM at daybreak
Position of Police Officer Shepard and the Patrol when fired upon at 1030 hrs
Position where Sergeant Kaplan was killed by his body was recovered by Kirk
Assaults team led by Mike Greer with Air Cadet Nimmo
Captain Hosking, Section Officer Tiffin, and others as engagement commenced
Corporal Duerson killed here. Recovered by Kirk's
Sullen Hopkins's view
Position of Hopkins when he was ambushed and shot at 1pm
Jonathan Mayo fired on the patrol
Private positions occupied by Sergeant Gatsweli Ndhlovu, and others he was instructed in the field by helicopter fire, and Lumano Mabaleka was killed
ZAPU/ZIPRA/ZIPRA positions
Diagram of page 6 is also the scene of a truck and the position occupied by Jeffrey Mpakanyo. Here the ZAPU/ZIPRA group took up the initial positions to fire on the patrol
ZAPU/ZIPRA positions
Hill position where Hosking had returned upon fire
Hosking ordered Tiffin and a Sub-Machine gunner to block any movement to the west. Hosking took the rest of the patrol to meet the reinforcements
Hosking ordered his men to withdraw
Position fired on by Tiffin and others. Two of Mlenga's group killed here. Jonathan Mayo, after the engagement left three of his group dead: James Dumagumbe, Ottemoyo and Lumano Mabaleka. Lieutenant Alfredo Mutsi then dead here on 14 August 1967. Detective Inspector Tomlinson found 30 puppets
Movement of Provost Pilots during the contact
Area of Corporal Duerson and other reinforcements, including later Sergeant Major Kaplan
Position where Private Mlenga fled during the engagement. Indeed Dzeka was here also, hoping to ambush Jonathan Mayo but then Mayo and Jabulani Nkomo encircled him. Mr Ndebele shot dead one of the wounded on 14 August. Tomlinson recovered 7.62mm cases
Hosking led the reinforcements to Tiffin and the African victim found in the bush on the west, following the ZAPU/ZIPRA spoor
Concealed ZAPU/ZIPRA position where Jackson Mpala occupied a position here
Drawn by Wood, Jeffries details by Detective Inspector Tomlinson


Operation Nickel
10 August - 8 September 1967
0 25 50 75 100
Kilometres
J.K.T. Wood
1-2 August 1967: 70 ZIPRAMK cadres crossed.
JCC Nickel 10-16 August 1967.
10 August 1967: 1 captured.
14 August 1967: 1 cadre killed.
12 August 1967: Petersen arrested but escaped.
14 August 1967: 1 arrested.
3 September 1967: 1 arrested.
23 September 1967: 1 arrested in Chaurumbga near the Mozambican border.
10 August 1967: 5 cadres killed. Corporal Davison & Private Kororo killed; Captain Hosking, Inspector Phillips, WO2 Kefasi and Section Officer Tiffin wounded.
JCC Nickel 16-26 August 1967.
22 August 1967: 1 killed by Game Warden.
WANKIE NATIONAL PARK
3 August 1967: 8 cadres killed, 6 captured, 1 escaped.
4 September 1967: 3 cadres killed, Private Nyika killed & Privates Nedzasyi & Juda wounded.
20 August 1967: E Company, 1RAR HQ.
26 August 1967: one body found.
22 August 1967: 1 RAR soldier wounded, Lt Pierson mistakenly killed.
18 August 1967: camp found.
19 August 1967: 1 killed.
20 August 1967: 1 arrested by Botswana Police.
22 August 1967: 4 killed, Lt Smith & WO2 Tinniswood killed.
23 & 29 August 1967: airstrikes.
24 August 1967: 2 captured.
22 August 1967: 1 arrested.
22 August 1967: Sub-JCC at Point 222.
23 August 1967: 2 cadres killed, LCorporal Cosmos & Patrol Officer Horn killed, Lt Whall & six RAR soldiers wounded.
JCC Nickel 25 August - 9 September 1967.
2 August 1967: 2 arrested on a bus.
31 August 1967: 1 captured.
31 August 1967: 4 cadres killed, 1 RLI trooper wounded.
24 August 1967: 2 captured.
27 August 1967: 4 arrested by Botswana Police.
1 September 1967: surviving ZIPRA cadres crossed into Botswana. 3 & 4 September: 17 cadres arrested by Botswana Police.
28 August 1967: Petersen shot dead.
BOTSWANA
MAKGADIKGADI PAN
BULAWAYO

Early in the morning of Monday, 14 August Geldenhuys and Acting Pilot Officer Richard Beaver staged the first attack in anger by a fixed-wing aircraft within Rhodesia when they strafed the Inyantue horseshoe with 230 rounds from their Provost's twin Browning .303 machine guns. They did so ignoring the admonition of their commander, Air Vice-Marshal Hawkins, that his aircraft were not to be used to kill when ground troops could do so more effectively.

A sweep found the bodies of Lameck Maduba, James Gumaguma and Sibonyoni. Joseph Bothwell Ndhlovu, although wounded, reached for his rifle and was shot dead by Lieutenant Wardle. Having abandoned large quantities of weapons and equipment, the survivors carried off another wounded man in the darkness. He did not live long, as Noble shot him dead just over a kilometre to the east at 1400 hours. Awards followed with Phillips and Tiffin receiving the Police Decoration for Gallantry, and Flying Officer Michael Grier, RSM Korb, Sergeant Whyte and Private Chikafu being awarded the Military Forces Commendation.

JOC Nickel had further success late on Monday, 14 April when Inspector A. Allenby of the Rhodesia railways security arrested the straggler Tdladi at Inundhla siding. He was carrying the AK-47 rifle he had gone to retrieve while lost. He would later be handed to the South African authorities and end up imprisoned on Robben island.

The surviving 16 men of Lobengula group retreated deeper into the Wankie national park, aiming for the waterholes of the Amamanga vlei and intending to lie low until the hue and cry died down. Taking care to brush out their tracks, they disappeared from sight for the next three days but would lose another man, Calvin Nzungu, left behind sleeping during a night stop. Nzungu headed westward for the border where the Botswanan police arrested him on 20 August.

On Tuesday, 15 August, even though the news released from Wankie was sketchy, the Rhodesian public were forcibly reminded of the armed insurgency when the high court in Salisbury sentenced eight ZANU infiltrators to 20 years' imprisonment under the Law and Order

(Maintenance) Act.

In Wankie national park, the hunt continued with a third helicopter being positioned at Shapi pans, west of Main camp, to assist in leapfrogging small ‘sticks’ of four men, into ambush positions ahead of the quarry once tracks had been found. The Alouette III could carry six passengers at a pinch, but four fully kitted-out soldiers was the usual load. The Rhodesian army was in the process of adopting the four-man ‘stick’ of two riflemen, an MAG machine-gunner and a junior leader armed with a rifle and a transceiver radio as the basic sub-unit. Although the RAR still argued that the ten-man section was the minimum needed and that platoon actions were desirable, experience taught that four men, being more vulnerable, were more likely to remain alert, and their self-loading FN 7.62mm rifles and the MAG gave them a heavy weight of fire.

In Wankie, on Wednesday, 16 August, JOC Nickel decided to move to Shapi pans to be closer to their southward-disappearing quarry. The RRAF designated Main camp’s airstrip as a temporary forward airfield.

Stealing the limelight, however, was MK cadre Paul Petersen. He had abandoned his stolen car in Bulawayo and had made his way west to Figtree. There, after asking a white farmer’s wife for a drink, he took her and her six-year old son hostage. Somehow, with the aid of her gardener, the woman and child escaped to raise the alarm. The farmhouse was surrounded by the BSAP and Petersen was shot dead by Section Officer Steyn.

On Thursday, 17 August Brigadier Prentice replaced Major Walter Godwin as JOC commander with RAR Major ‘Mac’ Willar. Flight Lieutenant Butler set up a forward air-support operations centre (FASOC) to control the two Provosts, two PRAW aircraft and four helicopters assigned to him. Flight Lieutenant P.J.H. Petter-Bowyer had just arrived in the fourth helicopter.

Amid all these preparations an African water-pump attendant walked into Shapi to report that, on the previous evening, he and other attendants at Verney’s pan near the Amamanga vlei had been asked for food by David Madziba and Issac Lizwe of the Lobengula group. The attendant added that he had seen human tracks near Gubolala pan. RSM Korb and 1 Platoon A Company 1RAR was ordered to follow those. Wardle and 15 men of 3

Platoon were sent to Verney's pan to search for other spoor. Noble's 10 Platoon moved into stop positions to the south. Aircraft were ordered to search the area and, if possible, drive the quarry to ground. Once Korb and Wardle had found and were following separate tracks, E Company 1RAR was sent to create a western stop line.

Operation Nickel was beginning to bear further fruit. On Friday, 18 August the tracks being followed by Korb and Wardle converged. Their discovery of positive signs of flight, a dropped piece of cloth and a knife, prompted the JOC to fly Noble's 10 Platoon D Company 1RAR to cover the southern border of the game park. Lieutenant Charles Piers's Mortar Platoon was dispatched by road from Mitswiri pan to the west to reinforce 10 Platoon's stop line. Piers, however, was soon reporting he was encountering fresh human spoor and was ordered to follow it. Unwittingly he had discovered the hitherto unknown presence of John Dube's Luthuli group then encamped in the southwestern corner of the park.

At 1445 hours Wardle's tracker spotted the exhausted men of the Lobengula group asleep in thickets of bush in ambush positions on their tracks. In the ensuing exchange of fire two insurgents were killed and four surrendered. Wardle questioned the prisoners who betrayed the presence of ten of their colleagues hidden only ten metres away. Wardle challenged them and opened fire. The response was an explosion as an insurgent dropped a primed grenade and sparked an intense fire which detonated the ammunition and explosives carried by the hidden men. Five died in the inferno and one burning man was shot dead by Wardle as he charged at him. Another surrendered but in the smoke and confusion the commander of the Lobengula group, David Madziba, led an escape to the east. It would be five hours before Wardle deemed the area safe enough from the exploding ammunition to conduct a sweep and discover their spoor. Another survivor was found and arrested. The follow-up operation would cover 50 kilometres in 24 hours before closing on the escapees. In the ensuing fight, the RAR killed Andries Motsepe, the second in command, Daniel Ndhlela, Tulani Maduna, Norman Dhlamini, Jack Nduna, Jones Mokogotsi, Charles Mhambi and Templeton Mzondeni (alias Alfred Sharp). They captured Isaac Lizwe, Peter Moses, Peter Banda, Lot Chirudzi, James Harmans and Joseph Zami. The only one to escape was David Madziba who ran eastward to hide near St Paul's mission,

130 kilometres away on the Shangani river in the Lupane Tribal Trust Land. He became ill and on 3 September identified himself to a headman who reported his presence to the mission. The BSAP was summoned and arrested him. In the aftermath, Wardle was awarded a Bronze Cross of Rhodesia, the third highest gallantry medal.

This contact coincided with the arrival at Shapi pans of the first South African Alouette III helicopter, flying in from Katima Mulilo in the Caprivi Strip to reinforce Operation Nickel. South African helicopters would be assisting Rhodesian forces for the next 13 years. This helicopter was particularly welcome because, unlike the Rhodesian Alouettes, it was equipped with a Becker homing device that would shortly be put to use.

The Rhodesian broadcast of the news of the clashes in Wankie prompted wild claims from ZAPU and SAANC headquarters in Lusaka that their forces had killed 66 Rhodesian servicemen. James Chikerema and Oliver Tambo also chose this moment to reveal that they had signed the ZAPU–SAANC military alliance. Chikerema and Tambo declared: “It is the determination of these combined forces to fight the common settler enemy to the finish, at any point of encounter as they make their way to their respective fighting zones … After all, as comrades in arms, we are facing a common enemy, fighting for a common purpose, facing a common fate—hence a combined force for a common onslaught against the enemy at every point of encounter as we march down for the liberation of our respective countries.”[6] This declaration would be used to justify South Africa’s intervention in Rhodesia.

With the Lobengula group eliminated, JOC Nickel concentrated on the tracks of the unknown group being followed by Piers’s Mortar Platoon south on the road to the Leasha pan on the Gwabazabuya river, close to the Botswanan border. At sunset on that Friday, 18 August Piers found an abandoned camp and nine sets of tracks to Leasha pan, 15 kilometres due south. The JOC sought to close off the escape route by flying men of E Company 1RAR early the next morning into blocking positions to the southwest, south and east of Piers, and on the nearby Botswanan border. As this was done, Piers reached Leasha pan, unaware that the Luthuli group was watching him from their camp two and half kilometres to the south. He initiated a search of the immediate area and at 0930 hours one of his patrols spotted and fired at two

Luthuli men who had returned from hunting and were drinking at the pan. The hunters returned fire and fled. Piers's men swept the area and flushed out and shot at Christopher Mohale of ZAPU who ran northward. Near Piers's vehicles, the lead scout shot dead Ernest Mudulu of the MK. Not knowing how many he was tracking, Piers set up night ambushes in the area, and then patrolled it the next day. On Sunday, 20 August E Company joined him to set up their headquarters at the pan. Lieutenant Nick Smith and 1 Platoon A Company arrived at dusk.

The news that day was that the Botswanan police had arrested the earlier escapee, Nzungu. Alerted by the shots and helicopter activity, Dube, however, had moved southward through the thick bush. He used the night of 19–20 August to cross the southern border of the national park to camp in the extreme west of the Tjolotjo Tribal Trust Land. There, seeking advice on a site for a semi-permanent camp, he sent Donald Nkonkoni and Dumisani Dhlangamandhla to contact a local Bushman who was known to live at the confluence of the Nata and Tegwani rivers. They failed to find him but instead secured food from Sibanda, a cattleman, who warned them that there was a military airstrip at point 222 on the Botswanan border on the right bank of the Nata river.

In the southwest of Wankie national park that day, Tuesday, 22 August, patrols were casting around for tracks, while helicopters ferried in troops and fuel to the airstrip at point 222 in preparation for the coming operations. An African game ranger found fresh tracks of seven or eight men at the game fence but no one knew they belonged to the undiscovered Luthuli group. At 1045 hours Nick Smith's 1 Platoon A Company 1RAR followed these tracks southeastward. At 1300 hours four kilometres away, they found an abandoned camp for 12–15 men and tracks leading out of it. JOC Nickel moved troops to the boundary fence and flew E Company to blocking positions along the Nata river to the south. At 1405 hours, three kilometres north of the Nata river and nearing the Botswanan border in an arrowhead formation, Smith's 17 men approached Dube's well-camouflaged 40 individual shallow scrapes sited to provide the all-round defence of an area of 9,000 square metres. Dube's men held their fire until the trackers were ten metres away. Although pinned down and quickly becoming low on ammunition because the troops were only carrying 50 rounds each, Smith

radioed an optimistic message asking for reinforcements to help him “winkle out” the enemy.

Geldenhuys was overhead in his Provost at 1500 hours and dived in to distract the Luthuli group only to have his port wing holed. At 1540 hours Smith’s radio went silent. He had gone to the aid of Platoon Warrant Officer Timitiya who had been at the front with the trackers. Timitiya had fired off his ammunition and had run back to borrow an MAG machine gun from a soldier at the rear. On his return, he had stood behind a tree and fired two short bursts before being shot dead by two ZAPU cadres, Voil Ndhlovu and Peter Moyo. They then killed Smith as he ran to Timitiya’s assistance. (Ndhlovu and Moyo would later face the death penalty for the killing of Timitiya and Smith). Five Luthuli men led by Chris Hani then attempted to drive off the RAR with a bayonet charge but were repelled by the remaining MAG gunner. The MK element of the Luthuli group had borne the brunt of the RAR fire with Robert Baloyi, Charles Sishuba and Barry Masipa killed, Sparks Moloi (alias Pooe) the political commissar mortally wounded, and Peter Mhlongo and Mbitshane wounded. Mhlongo was unable to walk. The ZAPU element had lost Donald Nkonkoni and George Mulilo who had fled when the firing started. They would be arrested two days later, on 24 August, east of the Nata river at a kraal in the Tjolotjo Tribal Trust Land. RAR Lance-Corporal Mavaradze took command of the survivors, withdrew them and redistributed among them the few remaining rounds. He had no radio and some of his men were unarmed, because, in the rush of the retreat, they had left their rifles behind. The troops’ packs, taken off at the start of the contact, had also been abandoned, further weakening their capability. Mavaradze sent three men to get help and later withdrew the remaining men to the boundary fence. Despite their losses, the morale of the Luthuli group was high as they helped themselves to the RAR’s rations, combat jackets, FN rifles, the MAG and the radios. Indeed, Peter Mfene was confident enough to try to use one of the radios to trap a passing helicopter into landing to pick up casualties. As he could not know that the callsign of any aircraft was ‘Cyclone’, the pilot was not fooled. Having made stretchers for the wounded, Dube led the Luthuli group southward into the night. The stretcher-bearers found it difficult to keep up and one of them, Matsobane Ramoshabe, having gone forward to protest to Dube, lost his way in the dark. Sparks Moloi (Pooe) died after being carried for only 400 metres.

Peter Petter-Bowyer, seen here as a Vampire pilot, was a visionary innovator in aerial counter-insurgency tactics; he pioneered aerial tracking and controlling tracker dogs from an aircraft. He later went on to develop a lethal range of armaments for the air force.

Dumiso Dabangwa (centre), ZAPU's military chief. This photo was taken during the ceasefire in 1980, with members of the British Monitoring Force. On the right is Petter-Bowyer. The man with the peaked Soviet cap is another ZAPU general, Lookout Masuku.

At the Nata river, the advance guard of ten led by Dube blundered into Rhodesian Army Service Corps African drivers and a BSAP constable guarding trucks. The exchange of fire wounded a Rhodesian soldier. The sound of firing drew Lieutenant Kenneth Peirson of E Company 1RAR from his nearby ambush position to investigate. In the dark his men mistook him for the enemy and shot and killed him. The consolation for the Rhodesian forces that night was that Flying Officer Ian Harvey spotted the survivors of 1 Platoon on the border road. What had happened to them was, of course, not yet known.

The next morning, Wednesday, 23 August, JOC Nickel's commander, Major Willar, flew to join the survivors with reinforcements and ammunition. They retraced their steps to their ambush site but found it deserted. The loss of the clothing from the looted packs was seen as more important than the radios because the RAR survivors held Smith's spare batteries. The 40-odd firing positions at last told Willar the size of the force he was hunting.

There was further consolation because a legendary former Rhodesian army RSM, Willie de Beer, then employed by National Parks, spotted human tracks while showing the helicopter pilot, Petter-Bowyer, a buffalo cull in progress at Nehimba pan near the JOC at Shapi. De Beer dropped off his young ranger, van Heerden, to ambush the tracks. De Beer drove on and shortly after van Heerden shot and killed Christopher Mohale, the fugitive from the contact at Leasha pan 60 kilometres to the south.

The Luthuli group was by then well across the Nata river into the Maitengwe Tribal Trust Land. An attempt was made to use the South African Alouette's Becker homing device to find them by inducing an MK prisoner to call them up on the radio in Xhosa and Afrikaans. The Luthuli group did not take the

bait but their whereabouts was given away by their straggler, Ramoshabe, who had arrived at a kraal at Siwuwu pools on the Nata river, and was betrayed by its inhabitants to Second Lieutenant William Winall of 13 Platoon E Company 1RAR.

It was therefore known that the quarry comprised 15 ZAPU and 15 MK men. Winall and his men were joined by Second Lieutenant John Pritchard's 15 Platoon E Company 1RAR. At 1130 hours, led by two BSAP tracker dog teams, they began to follow the two-hour-old tracks of 30 men heading east. Willar placed the Mortar Platoon into a blocking position on the Tegwani river and asked the RRAF for a speculative airstrike on the river's remaining pool. Winall and Pritchard were ordered to halt in an open vlei and light an identification fire.

At 1644 hours, controlled by Petter-Bowyer in his Alouette helicopter, two Hawker Hunter Mk9s strafed the trees around the pool with 68mm Matra rockets and 30mm cannon shells. A Canberra strike was due at 1800 hours, designed to catch anyone who thought the airstrike was over and returned for water. Petter-Bowyer's guarded speech, however, led Winall to believe that the Luthuli group was at the pool during the airstrike. Knowing that the pool would shortly be bombed, Winall led his men into the nearby thick bush to camp for the night. Because he made the fundamental mistakes of not clearing the area or of posting sentries, he did not discover that he was sharing the clump of bush with his quarry.

At 1740 hours, as the RAR troops bedded down for the night, John Dube and George Driver of MK appeared, wearing captured RAR berets and camouflage combat jackets, carrying FN rifles and speaking in Sindebele. Before the surprised RAR men came to their senses, Dube suddenly declared "I am a terrorist" and opened fire. A close-range volley of shots and hail of grenades followed from his hidden ZAPU-MK comrades as the RAR soldiers scrambled for their weapons and returned fire. To add to the confusion at 1800 hours two Canberras (crewed by 'Nobby' Nightingale and Bernard Vaughan, and Richard Culpan and David Postance) dropped 96 281b fragmentation bombs five kilometres away. Wounded, Winall radioed for help but John Rogers, the helicopter pilot directing the strike, was not only out of fuel but so was his base at point 222. Fuel had to be flown in from

Shapi, wasting time.

While he waited, Winall withdrew his men to the edge of the bush and there repulsed two fresh attacks. The Luthuli group broke off in the dark at 1840 hours. Again an RAR unit had left behind food, kit, equipment and some rifles. Private Cosmas and Patrol Officer Spencer Thomas (23) had been killed and Thomas's dog, Leon, had fled. (He turned up a month later at Pumula mission 60 kilometres away and took two weeks to catch. He returned to action in the Zambezi valley in 1968.) Wounded along with Winall were the second BSAP dog handler, Patrol Officer Guy Horn, Sergeant-Major Kisi, Lance-Corporal Tichargwa and privates Jonas, Vandarayi and Swondo. In return, they had killed Jack Simelane (Sibanda) and Nicholas Donda.

Having looted the RAR kit and weapons, Dube led his men northward in high spirits to the Nata and Tegwani confluence. Once there, he and Perry Ncube, Ncambaza, Mashigo, George Driver, Jambo, Mlenze and Christopher Nkosana set off to find food and water, while Donald Nyati and Tjali (alias Mjojo) led the remainder of the Luthuli group to camp in the tall grass beside the river.

Moving to Tjolotjo village to be closer to the action and not yet knowing the fate of Winall's men, JOC Nickel called for reinforcements and was given 2 Commando 1RLI from Salisbury and D Company 1RAR from Bulawayo. Other reinforcements in the form of an SAP unit which flew into Bulawayo airport prompted wild press reports that they were paratroopers of the nonexistent South African Special Air Service who had been seconded to the Rhodesian army for anti-guerrilla training. Other SAP units would follow by road.

JOC Nickel deployed D Company into blocking positions on the Nata and Tegwani rivers. Close by, Winall attempted to establish radio contact with an overflying Provost but failed. Finally, at 0130 hours the wounded Horn used his police radio to contact the police station at Dett, requesting an urgent casevac for Winall and Jonas. Flight Lieutenant Christopher Dixon responded with a daring night landing of his helicopter without knowing where the enemy was, earning himself an MFC. He flew Winall and Private Jonas to Wankie hospital.

The next morning, Thursday, 24 August, while the rump of the Luthuli group waited on the Nata for the return of Dube and his foraging party, helicopters arrived to remove dead and wounded to Tjolotjo. At 1330 hours Pritchard and the other survivors of 13 and 15 platoons were withdrawn by helicopter while Second Lieutenant John Duncan and elements of 1 Platoon A Company and the Mortar Platoon 1RAR arrived on foot from point 222 and swept the contact area. Other platoons were placed in blocking positions and at dusk Second Lieutenant Ben Schlachter of D Company and Patrol Officer Des Howse, a dog handler, arrested the two ZAPU deserters, Mulilo and Nkonkoni, at a village near the Nata river. The Mortar Platoon and D Company then laid ambushes on the riverline.

Simultaneously, Operation Isotope II enjoyed further success after fresh tracks of the five ZAPU survivors of the contact on the island on 8 August were found near the Vuti game fence. Led by two civilian trackers, the BSAP and a section of 8 Platoon C Company 1RAR pursued them and the next day caught four of them hiding in a deeply eroded riverbed in the Vuti African Purchase Area. The fifth member, Khamba, who had left them to find food, hid in the bush when he noticed aircraft flying near his comrades' hideout.

Perhaps because they were aware the ZAPU-MK expedition was being wiped out, ZAPU's representatives in London, N.T. Chitsiga, Pilani Ndebele and Leo Baron, attempted to induce Britain to intervene in Rhodesia by force to restore law and order. George Thomas, the minister of state at the Commonwealth office dismissed their arguments that there was a breakdown of law and order or an intrusion by South African forces. The Commonwealth office also rejected a warning by the Rhodesian government that it might be forced to apply sanctions on Zambia if terrorists continued to cross the Zambezi river into Rhodesia. It also denied that the British supported the terrorists as an adjunct to their economic campaign against Rhodesia. Perhaps because Operation Nickel was clearly in the mopping-up phase, Ian Smith thought it opportune to reinforce the Rhodesian threat to Zambia by publishing a protest note he was sending to Harold Wilson. This decried British connivance at Zambia's active support for ZANU's and ZAPU's armed terrorists and their incursions into Rhodesia. Smith enclosed a copy of the statement of 19 August by Chikerema and Tambo extolling the exploits of their forces in northwestern Matabeleland. Smith warned Wilson that his

government would do everything in its power to protect its citizens with the most vigorous measures to root out and destroy the terrorist bands. Zambia countered by demanding the British government stop the South African invasion of Britain's colony of Southern Rhodesia, and warned that the Rhodesian crisis had entered a new phase too grave to be ignored. Using language the British government found deeply offensive, the Zambian government pilloried them for their prevarication, double standards, deliberate ineptitude and failure to use force. Zambian officials commented that this demand amounted to a request to Britain to send troops to Rhodesia. Smith followed his note with a full statement in a debate in the Rhodesian legislative assembly on 30 August.

The British were drawn to comment when Lardner-Burke, the Rhodesian minister of law and order, announced the next day that the convicted murderers of Petrus Johannes Oberholzer, James Dhlamini and Victor Mlambo, and the murderer of a chief, Duly Shadreck would be executed. The Commonwealth office immediately protested that, unless the British governor, Sir Humphrey Gibbs, had confirmed the execution, anyone who carried it out would be committing murder. In the event, on 2 September, Judge Fieldsend granted Dhlamini, Mlambo and Shadreck an interim stay of execution. Judge Lewis extended this on 22 September but refused a permanent stay of execution.

Friday, 25 August had served to frustrate JOC Nickel. There was no sign of the Luthuli group then hidden in the riverine bush along the Tegwani. At dusk the remnants led by Tjali divided out the contents of the missing men's packs and set off along the river. During a break Leonard Mandla Nkosi became ill. Given the last map and compass, Thula Bopela (alias Sizwe) and Daluxolo Luthuli were left behind to wait for him to recover. The rump of the Luthuli group camped at dawn, hungry and fractious while Nkosi, Bopela and Luthuli were helped by locals. They later went by bus and train via Bulawayo, Salisbury and Umtali to Chikore mission where Bopela's father taught. After an attempt to escape into Mozambique, Bopela was arrested near Chisumbanje in southeast Rhodesia. He was tried, sentenced to death, reprieved and imprisoned until the advent of the Zimbabwean state in 1980. The Rhodesian security forces caught Luthuli en route to Botswana. They handed him to the South Africans who imprisoned him. After 1994, he

became a lieutenant-colonel in the South African National Defence Force. Nkosi reached Botswana and changed sides, joining the South African Security Branch. He was assassinated in 1975.

In northern Mashonaland Operation Isotope II scored a further success early on Saturday, 26 August with the arrest of Khamba, the fifth survivor of the contact on the island, when boarding a bus near Vuti. Later in the day Mutopo and Mareki, members of the second ZAPU water party, were apprehended by the BSAP on Mutopo's family farm, farm 311 in the Musengesi African Purchase Area. A day later Maraha, a further member of the second water party, was arrested at his father's farmhouse on farm 52 on the Karunyana African Purchase Area.

By Sunday, 27 August, the failure of its search provoked JOC Nickel to order the firing of the bush to flush the insurgents out. The mopane scrub, however, refused to burn.

Denied any news, the press concentrated on speculating about South African reinforcements. This prompted a categorical denial of any involvement in Rhodesia or Botswana by the SAP commissioner, Lieutenant-General J.M. Keevy. He conceded, however, that there was close liaison with Rhodesia and Botswana and that future joint action was possible. His denial was contradicted immediately by press reports of four South African Air Force Alouettes painted in RRAF colours assisting Rhodesian forces, and others were said to be patrolling the Limpopo river in the Messina area. South African farmers along the Limpopo had been warned about possible terrorist incursions and had been shown photographs of terrorists in uniform. They had been told to keep their doors locked, to be on guard and not to employ strange Africans.

At dusk on the Tegwani river the tension between the MK and ZAPU cadres came to a head. Tjali, the MK leader, announced that he was leaving behind Peter Mhlongo who had a wound in his heel and would lead his MK members, Wana, Nthlabathi, Mcebisi, Mfene, Sithole, Makhasi, Gambo, Mbitshane, Ndhlovu, Nikita, Marema, Maroha, Kenneth, Manshack, Victor Nhlamini and Joseph Hadebe into Botswana and onward to South Africa. This left Donald Nyati with six ZAPU men and Peter Mhlongo stumbling along on crude crutches.

Getting lost, weak and hungry, this group could go no farther by dawn on Sunday, 28 August. Dumisani Dhlangamandhla and Stanley Mehlo left to find food but deserted after obtaining some at a rural store. They were caught by the BSAP on a bus heading for Plumtree on 30 August. Three days earlier, the Botswanan police had detained the missing foragers, Perry Ncube, Ncambaza, Mashigo and Driver at point 171 on the border. A day later the rest of their party, namely John Dube, Jambo, Mlenze and Nkosana, were arrested at Tutumi in Botswana. It would be several days before the fate of Tjali and his 16 MK men was known.

The hunt for the survivors of the ZAPU-MK incursion had continued in the Tjolotjo area with a variety of tracks being followed and troops moved into blocking positions. On 29 August JOC Nickel ordered Hunter jet fighters to make mock attacks and create sonic booms to demoralize and drive the quarry to earth. By mid-morning the discovery of fresh spoor by Lieutenant Noble and his 10 Platoon D Company 1RAR promised progress. The JOC responded by ordering a Canberra strike over a wide area ahead of Noble in the mid-afternoon. In its wake Noble resumed his follow-up, finding empty tins and bloodstained bandages. He continued the next day, uncovering bloodied clothing. What was soon clear, however, was that the fugitives had penetrated the blocking cordon of 1RAR and 2 Commando 1RLI troops. They had obtained some sadza (maize porridge) and milk from a kraal on the Tegwani river and then gone south.

On 31 August Ambrose Ncube of ZAPU was captured after being betrayed to the RLI by the people who had just fed him at their kraal. Ncube was induced to lead the RLI troops, reinforced by Second Lieutenant Ben Schlachter's 11 Platoon D Company 1RAR, to where his companions were hiding. At 1230 hours gunfire was exchanged at close range. A ZAPU grenade wounded RLI Trooper Engelbrecht, an MAG gunner, before the Rhodesian assault killed Donald Nyati, Goliat Thebe, Abraham Marikita and Peter Mhlongo. Haliman Kobotshwa escaped. Among the abandoned packs, ammunition, explosives and weapons was a Rhodesian army FN rifle, a trophy from the earlier contacts. This left only Tjali's MK group unaccounted for. The hunt continued.

Operation Nickel had effectively ended on Saturday night, 2 September when

the remnants of Tjali's MK group escaped into Botswana only to be arrested by the Botswanan police. The rattle of the border fence as the men squeezed through it was all that Tjali's ambushers heard. The ambush was laid after an African tractor driver alerted the Rhodesian security forces after being asked by Tjali to obtain food.

Remaining at large were the ZAPU stragglers, Malama, Nduma and Nkonzo, who betrayed their presence by killing a rhino in the southern area of the Wankie national park. A follow-up on their tracks by Noble's 10 Platoon D Company 1RAR began on 3 September. Contact was made at 1315 hours on the next day when the three ZAPU cadres were shot and killed, but not before the last man had killed Private Nyika and wounded privates Pedzisayi and Juda.

In northern Mashonaland, Operation Isotope II continued. C Squadron SAS relieved C Company 1RAR at Makuti on 5 September and remained there until 17 September when the operation was terminated because, of the four ZAPU infiltrators at large, one, Jairos, was known to have returned to Zambia and the other three were suspected to have done likewise. They had indeed and one of them would return with Jairos on Operation Excess in July 1968 when one would be killed and the other escaped. All the weapons and equipment of the ZAPU group had been secured, apart from one AK-47 and one SKS rifle and only one Tokarev pistol was missing from the ZANU group of Isotope I.

Operation Nickel ended on Friday, 8 September. The ZAPU-MK death toll stood at 29 (12 ZAPU and 17 MK) for the loss of eight Rhodesian dead and 14 wounded. Seventeen infiltrators (ten ZAPU and seven MK) had been captured, and 30 (four ZAPU and 25 MK) had escaped to Botswana where they were imprisoned for several months for illegal entry and the unlawful possession of arms and ammunition. Thereafter, they were deported to Zambia from where many returned to Tanzania. One to do so was the future head of the South African Communist Party, Chris Hani, who had the temerity to issue a memorandum critical of the ANC leadership, and of his commander, Joe Modise, in particular, for directing a bungled and eventual suicide mission. For this, Hani was summarily sentenced to death but was later reprieved. The SAP subsequently killed two of the MK survivors in an

engagement in the Caprivi Strip on 20 August 1970. Another was arrested in Durban on 20 February 1971. Among the haul of captured weapons and equipment, much of it Chinese-made, were rocket launchers and antipersonnel mines.

Operation Nickel had a number of consequences. The first, of course, was the involvement of the SAP and supporting aircraft, against which the British continued to fume. If the South African army remained overtly aloof, covertly a relationship was formed which would endure until 1980. It started with a small step, despite the opposition of the chief of the South African Defence Force, Lieutenant-General Rudolph Hiemstra. The formidable Commandant Jan Breytenbach persuaded his chief of staff, General Louw, that South Africa needed special forces and that a relationship should be forged with the Rhodesian SAS. In the event, Breytenbach and 12 paratroopers underwent and most passed a Rhodesian SAS selection course.

The second consequence was the amendment of the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act that made the possession of ‘arms of war’ including munitions subject to the death penalty.

The third consequence was that ZAPU and ZANU, together with the South African insurgent movements and those in the Portuguese territories, were rewarded with increased financial support from the OAU.

The fourth result was that the Rhodesians, having tangled with a higher calibre of enemy, reviewed their tactics and skills. They acknowledged they had encountered a better quality of infiltrator than hitherto but attributed it to the involvement of the MK personnel who had been aggressive, skilful, well armed, led and possessed abundant supplies of ammunition. They had shown concern for their wounded but this had hampered their ability to flee. They had skilfully masked their tracks so that their pursuers had always encountered more men than expected. This prompted an investigation into the teaching of tracking, which ultimately led to the School of Infantry forming a tracking wing at Kariba under command of SAS Captain Brian Robinson. It produced highly successful five-man combat-tracker units. Tracker dogs had proved useful but the heat exhausted them and evaporated the scent. Experiments were conducted on controlling tracker dogs by radio from helicopters that increased the speed at which their quarry could be overtaken.

Other aspects were reviewed: for example, the ammunition carried on patrol was increased immediately to 150 rounds per man. Helicopters were used to move troops tactically. This would develop into the later, highly successful Fireforce concept of the use of helicopter-borne infantry to envelop a target. The Rhodesians were fortunate that, despite international sanctions, the French were willing to supply them with military helicopters and spares. The versatile Alouette III helicopter had already proved its worth and was one of the Rhodesians' scarce resources which they used to the maximum to achieve their enviable and enduring reputation as experts in the field of counter-insurgency. The Alouette III helicopter's maximum capacity of five passengers sponsored a debate on the minimum sub-unit size. The RLI advocated deploying half-sections or 'sticks' of four men to ease the problem of movement by helicopter. The casualties incurred in the close-range fighting in the dense mopane scrub, however, prompted the RAR to insist on a ten-man section and to recommend platoon actions. The army would adopt the RLI pattern. In other roles, the helicopter had also proved essential for casualty evacuation. Aerial reconnaissance had shown its worth as had harassment from the air. What was apparent, however, was that better radio communications and air-to-ground control were needed.

What worried the Rhodesian security forces was that it had taken ten days to discover the ZAPU-MK incursion which meant that the infiltrators had enjoyed some civilian support. It proved once more the need for a constant and determined psychological campaign to win the hearts and minds of the people. Failure in this area dogged the Rhodesian security forces until 1979 when, finally, conditions were right and psychological action was possible, if late, because majority rule was a reality and the Rhodesian people as a whole could be offered an alternative to the African nationalist view of the future. Until then, however, the prevailing racial attitudes of the governing Rhodesian Front party did not assist. On 21 December 1966 the right-wing minister of defence, Lord Graham, refused a request from Major-General R.R.J. Putterill, to commission Africans from the Rhodesian African Rifles who had already served with distinction in Malaya and in Operation Nickel and the like. Although Rhodesia's African servicemen would defend her loyally and fiercely to the end with desertion a rare occurrence, Graham robbed Rhodesia of an opportunity to reward loyalty and professionalism and to strengthen her chances of containing the widening insurgency. The

Rhodesian SAS was also denied the African recruits who would have allowed it to operate more effectively in the rural areas. It would take ten years for Graham's decision to be reversed and by then Rhodesia was in desperate straits. An opportunity to strengthen the small regular army was lost through bigotry and fear.[7]

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5 Moore, David Brent, The Contradictory Construction of Hegemony in Zimbabwe: Politics, Ideology, and Class in the Formation of a New African State, PhD thesis, York University, North York, Ontario, 1990, pp. 92, 101.

6 Rhodesia, Debates, Vol. 69, cols. 231–260; Keesing's, 23–30 Sep 1967, Vol. XVI, p. 22273; Facts on File, 12–18 Oct 1967, Vol. XXVII, No. 1407, p. 432; CSR 45–1967, Note to the UK government from the Rhodesian government, 28 Aug 1967.

7 Flower, Ken, Serving Secretly: Rhodesia's CIO Chief on Record, Galago, Alberton, 1987, p. 113.

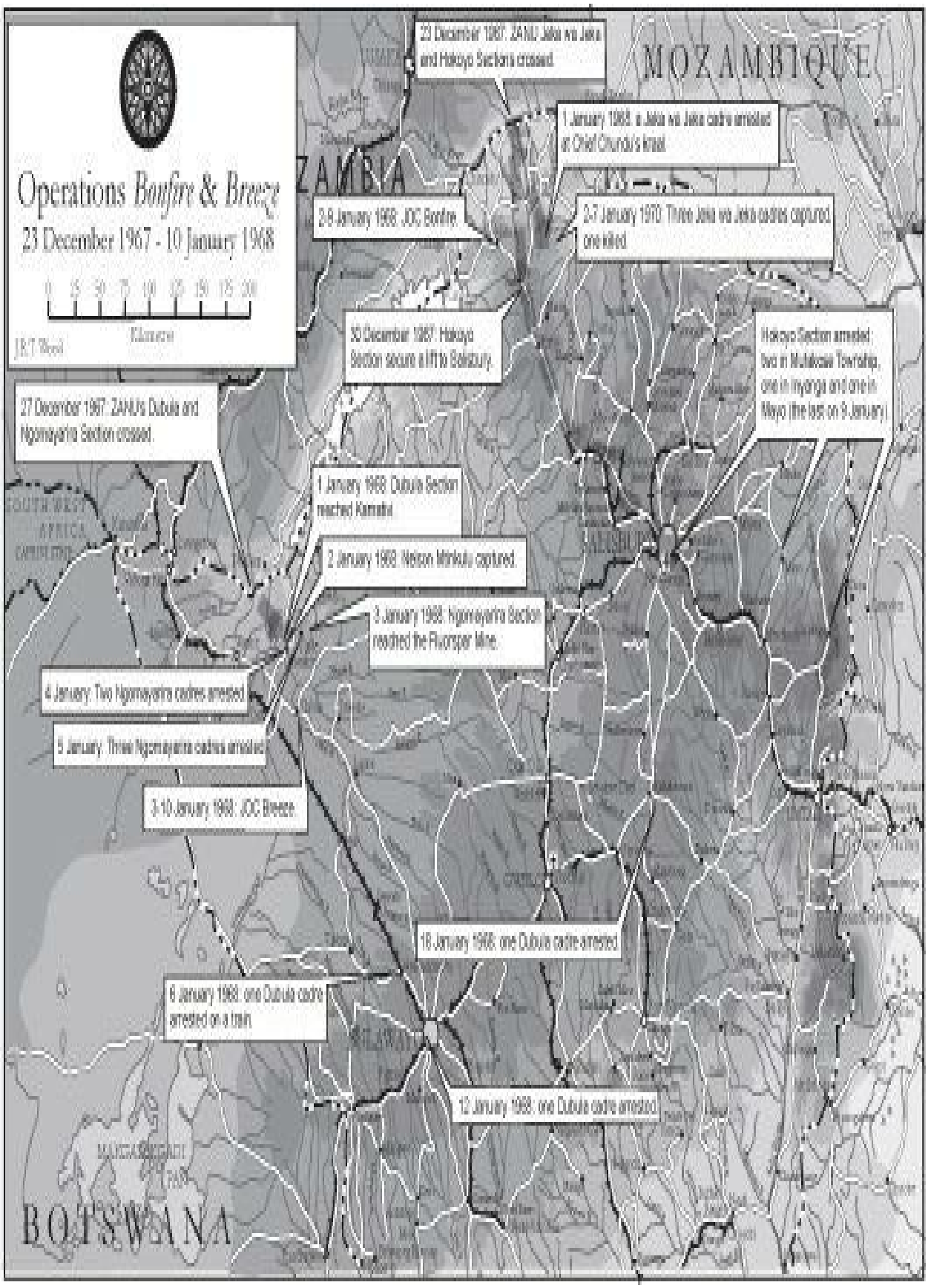
CHAPTER SEVEN:

ZANU'S LATE 1967 CAMPAIGN: OPERATIONS BONFIRE, BREEZE AND SCULPTURE

In late December 1967, in the wake of ZAPU's defeat and still impelled by the fear of losing the support of its OAU and Eastern bloc sponsors, ZANU re-ignited its attempt to foment an uprising in Rhodesia.

In December 1967 Noel Mukono, responsible for ZANU's military effort, decided to dispatch a four-pronged incursion by 21 men into Rhodesia. The scale of this small expedition reflected ZANU's lack of trained personnel and recruits. ZANU had only 22 men trained from February–November 1967 at Itumbi Reefs camp in Tanzania. In the event, poorly led and overburdened with weapons and kit, including ZANU flags, pamphlets, training notes and books of the quotations of Mao Zedong, the morale and discipline of these men would break down almost immediately with arguments over routes and the lack of food and water.

In preparation, ZANU subjected the men to a predeployment ritual before they departed from Lusaka (or at least that is what they later told their captors). Witnessed by Mukono, Herbert Chitepo, Peter Mutandwa, Henry Hamadzaripi, Jonas Mudzi, Richard Hove, Ephraim Sithole, John Mataure and Josiah Tongogara, a sheep was slaughtered and its blood smeared across the foreheads of some of the cadres. It was skinned and its entrails wrapped in the hide and buried. Peter Mutandwa then lightly cooked six pieces of meat and holding one piece of meat enjoined the following prayer, "O Spirits this is a celebration. We ask the spirits of Zimbabwe to help this young man. If this is against your wishes tell us. If not give us our country." Mutandwa gave one of the men muti in the form of roots wrapped in white paper to make him invisible to the enemy and wild animals. Mukono asked for ten minutes' absolute silence before beer was drunk and ZANU songs sung.


Operations *Bonfire* & *Breeze*
23 December 1967 - 10 January 1968
0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200
Kilometres
J&T Wood
23 December 1967: ZANU Jeka wa Jeka and Hakuya Sections crossed.
MOZAMBIQUE
1 January 1968: a Jeka wa Jeka cadre arrested at Chief Chundu's kraal.
ZAMBIA
2-8 January 1968: JOC Bonfire.
2-7 January 1970: Three Jeka wa Jeka cadres captured, one killed.
30 December 1967: Hakuya Section secure a lift to Salisbury.
Hakuya Section arrested: two in Mutakwasa Township, one in Inyanga and one in Mayo (the last on 9 January).
27 December 1967: ZANU's Dubula and Ngomayama Section crossed.
1 January 1968: Dubula Section reached Kamativi.
2 January 1968: Nelson Mhlaba captured.
3 January 1968: Ngomayama Section reached the Fluorspar Mine.
4 January: Two Ngomayama cadres arrested.
5 January: Three Ngomayama cadres arrested.
3-10 January 1968: JOC Breeze.
16 January 1968: one Dubula cadre arrested.
6 January 1968: one Dubula cadre arrested on a train.
12 January 1968: one Dubula cadre arrested.
BOTSWANA

SAP 104

An SAP Cessna 185 at Mtoko airfield, shortly before all South African aircraft operating in Rhodesia were sensibly camouflaged.

After the ceremony the men were divided into the Jeka wa Jeka five-man and Hokoyo six-man sections, who were ordered to infiltrate Mashonaland, and the Ngomanyarira and Dubula sections with five men each, who would go to Matabeleland. Following standard practice each section had a leader, a deputy leader, a political commissar, a medical orderly and a director of operations. Each man was given two or three pseudonyms and code-numbers.

Mukono and Felix Rice ordered the Jeka wa Jeka section to go to the Mtoko area northeast of Salisbury, avoiding the Rhodesian security forces, and once there report their safe arrival in a letter to 'Maria Tembo' of P.O. Box 2147, Lusaka. Their tasks were to organize the local tribesmen, to terrorize the whites and sabotage post offices, police stations and bridges. The Hokoyo section was to go the Inyanga area to contact the self-styled Chief Rekayi Tangwena who was being prosecuted under the Land Apportionment Act for squatting with his followers on the Gaeresi ranch owned by Charles Hamner. Thereafter, the group was to indoctrinate the locals, attack white farms and indeed kill all the whites and, in particular, white children, with the object of driving the parents away. The Hokoyo political commissar was ordered to report progress by writing to 'Job Mvura', 6 Chichester Road, P.O. Woodlands, Lusaka.

On Saturday, 22 December Mukono, Bernard Mtumha, Mataure and Tongogara transported the Jeka wa Jeka and Hokoyo sections from their holding camps in a Land Rover and a Toyota station-wagon to a point four miles from the Zambezi river. Care was taken to avoid contact with the Zambian security forces. Prior to crossing, each man was given £50 in Rhodesian currency. At the last moment two men became ill and were withdrawn from the Hokoyo section. In the early hours of 23 December the two groups were ferried across, three at a time, by two fishermen in a boat just west of Mana Pools, 63 kilometres east of Chirundu near F hunting camp. After crossing, the groups separated.

The four-man Hokoyo section had a map and a compass but the map got sodden with rain and the compass was dropped and broken. They pressed on and after a seven-day march reached the main Makuti–Karoi road on Saturday, 30 December where they stopped an Anglo-African Glass company truck. The driver, being a ZANU sympathizer, drove them to his house in Mufakose township in Salisbury. The group stayed at his house for just a day. Two of them, however, were arrested in Mufakose. The remaining two moved on to a kraal in the Tanda Tribal Trust Land, west of Inyanga. One was arrested in Inyanga and the final man at Mayo on 8 January 1968.

The Jeka wa Jeka section also walked south but a shortage of water and food forced them to change direction on Saturday evening, 30 December in the hope of finding assistance from a kraal, not realizing that the people they were among would alert the Rhodesian security forces. On Sunday morning, 31 December three members left in search of food. At 1730 hours on 1 January 1968 one of them, unarmed and without equipment, was arrested by the chief's messenger at Chief Chundu's kraal in the Mukwichi Tribal Trust Land, 50 kilometres north of Karoi. The BSAP were advised of the arrest in the early hours of Tuesday, 2 January and their subsequent interrogation yielded information of the crossing. At 0800 hours two armed Africans were seen near Mafira store, ten kilometres south of Chundu, moving in a southwesterly direction toward the main Chirundu–Karoi road.

Operation Bonfire was launched with a JOC at Makuti. C Company 1RAR was deployed there and dispatched a platoon in the Chundu area. The arrested man's SKS rifle and 49 rounds were soon found. The active assistance of the locals led to the capture of Kenneth Musene ten kilometres west of Chundu at 2250 hours. His companion escaped. By then, JOC Bonfire knew that two groups had crossed the Zambezi. C Squadron SAS reinforced the effort and their officer commanding, Major Dudley Coventry, took over command of the JOC.

Fresh tracks of one man were spotted on 4 January just south of the Mukwichi Tribal Trust Land. Then two SKS rifles and two bandoliers of 7.62mm ammunition were discovered near the Mafira store. At 0730 hours on Thursday, 4 January the fresh tracks of one cadre was found and followed near the Mukwichi river. Another insurgent bought food at Meda store that

day while his companion remained concealed. Two were then captured and the third was killed in a SAS-RLI ambush on 7 January. The troops were withdrawn on 9 January and the JOC disbanded.

Before then, on 27 December 1967, Mukono and the ZANU hierarchy had escorted the Ngomanyarira and Dubula sections in a Land Rover and two Toyota light trucks, one carrying a blue dinghy, from Lusaka, through Choma and along the Nkandabwe road to a track leading to the Zambezi river, two kilometres east of Mapeta island and almost opposite the Deka river mouth. Both groups were told to avoid contact with the Rhodesian security forces. The five-man Ngomanyarira section was ordered to make their way to the Fort Victoria area and the four-man Dubula section to Salisbury via Wankie. If they failed to reach Salisbury, they were ordered to operate in the Gwelo and Que Que area. Their purpose was to attack white farms and to terrorize whites in urban areas by indiscriminate shooting and throwing grenades into cinemas and clubs. They were given £50 each, their nicknames, code-numbers and ZANU flags, pamphlets, training notes and Mao's little red books. It took several trips for the boatmen to ferry them across. The Ngomanyarira section did not wait for the Dubula men but set off despite lacking a map and having no training in the use of their compass. Their progress was slow and by 3 January 1968 they had only reached the Fluorspar mine at Tinde, northeast of Kamativi mine.

The Dubula section had already arrived in the Kamativi area by Monday, 1 January. The next day they sent two members to buy food at the Kamativi mine. These two went straight to the beerhall where they aroused the suspicions of a compound policeman by pretending to be schoolboys and offering £4 for a lift to Dett. The policeman demanded their registration certificates that all Rhodesian Africans had to carry. As they replied that they had left them in the compound, he let one go to fetch them. BSAP Constable Mathew, on patrol from Dett, arrived and searched and arrested 15-year-old Nelson Mtinkulu, finding on him a Tokarev pistol and 100 rounds. Mtinkulu claimed to be part of a six-man group bound for Salisbury. He then misled the Rhodesians saying his unit was part of a 44-strong ZANU group bound for Salisbury, Que Que and Fort Victoria. He added that 56 South African MK men, en route to South Africa via Plumtree, had also crossed. This was seriously doubted because there was no affiliation between the MK and

ZANU.

Operation Breeze was proclaimed with its JOC at Dahlia from 1000 hours on Wednesday, 3 January. Major Michael Shute's E Company 1RAR was under command. The RRAF established a forward air support command post at Dahlia and a sector headquarters at Brady Barracks, Bulawayo, commanded by Wing Commander Christopher Dams. Two Alouette III helicopters, a Cessna 185 and a Trojan were allocated to the JOC and two armed Provosts and jet strike aircraft were put on standby at Thornhill. The South Africans immediately offered to help and placed two South African Air Force Cessna 185 aircraft and two Alouettes on two hours' readiness in South Africa and gave permission to the JOC to deploy the SAP company in the area.

The next day, Thursday, 4 January, Mtinkulu led a BSAP patrol to a base camp near Rabison Sialinda's kraal but his two companions had already caught a bus to Dett. On the way they bluffed their way through an RAR roadblock by saying that they had lost their registration certificates and were going to a funeral in Bulawayo. The failure of the soldiers to search them and to find their suspiciously large sums of money led to the issuing of new standing orders for the searching of vehicles. At Dett on Saturday, 6 January the two men boarded a train for Bulawayo. Detective Constable Mqanjelha arrested one of them when the train stopped at Nyamandhlovu. The other escaped detection by being in a separate compartment but was betrayed by his brother-in-law and arrested six days later at the Valley hotel in Mzilikazi township, Bulawayo. Mtinkulu's companion, the escapee from the Kamativi beerhall, had walked to Kana mission and then cycled via Que Que, Central estates and Umvuma to his kraal in the Narira Tribal Trust Land near Enkeldoorn, arriving on 10 January. He was betrayed by the locals and was arrested on 18 January at his kraal by Detective Section Officer Wray.

The Ngomanyarira section had fared no better. They hid in the Tinde hills and sent two members to buy food at Kamativi on Thursday, 4 January. On the way these two fell in with Constable Banda, a policeman on leave from Dett, and aroused his suspicions. He arranged to meet them at the beerhall and left for the Kamativi mine compound where he asked the mine police for help. The two Ngomanyarira men were arrested at noon at the beerhall and promptly admitted they belonged to a ZANU group and that the remaining

three were in the Tinde hills. The JOC instituted a search and three packs were found on the Gwai river, north of Kamativi. That night at 2300 hours, one of Ngomanyarira section stopped a prospector, Mr d'Oliveira, on the Kamativi–Binga road and asked to be taken to Binga. D'Oliveira refused and reported the incident to the BSAP at Kamativi, adding that there were other infiltrators hiding in a prospector's trench near Tinde mine. This confirmed the information gathered from the captured men.

The next morning, Friday, 5 January, led by the two arrested men, Second Lieutenant J.W. Pritchard, his 15 Platoon E Company 1RAR and eight policemen drove to search the area. He was supported by helicopters and two Hunter jet fighters were placed on 15 minutes' readiness at Thornhill. Three kilometres from the area, they encountered d'Oliveira and his fellow Portuguese prospector, Raimonde, who told them that they had just been entertaining three ZANU men who had arrived at their mine asking for food, medicine and a lift to Binga. As the ZANU men were waiting for the Portuguese to return, Pritchard borrowed d'Oliveira's Land Rover and his African driver who could identify the visitors, and piled nine of his men, including three MAG gunners, in the back. The driver drove into the compound and stopped a metre from where the terrorists were sitting. Pritchard's men sprang out of the vehicle and the three surrendered. One was armed with a primed grenade and their weapons and kit were found nearby. Pritchard was struck by the ease of their capture and their lack of ambition.

Operation Breeze was kept alive for the moment, with D Company replacing E Company because of Mtinkulu's claim of the crossing by the MK. As nothing transpired, the troops were stood down on 10 January.

A lesson learned was the value of PRAW aircraft acting as 'Telestar', relaying radio messages and compensating for the lack of range of the army's radios. The haul of weapons and kit was impressive and its weight daunting. There were four SKS rifles, two AK rifles, one Czech M25 and two French MAT sub-machine guns, three Tokarev pistols, 2,939 rounds of assorted ammunition, 22 grenades, 19 grenade primers, 21 200-gram and seven 400-gram TNT blocks, six landmines, 15 igniters, 30 detonators, eight switches, five RPG-2 rockets, one RPG-2 rocket launcher, 22 one-inch lengths of safety fuse, nine haversacks and an assortment of clothing, uniforms and

boots as well as the ZANU flags, pamphlets and Mao's books.

While the Rhodesian security forces would bask in the quick successes of operations Bonfire and Breeze, one arm of the forces protecting Rhodesia, the SAP, had yet to distinguish itself. On 27 December 1967 five of their men were detained in Zambia after they had crossed the Victoria Falls bridge in a Land Rover and had ignored an order to halt by the Zambian police. This prompted President Kaunda to allege on 1 January 1968 that they were Rhodesian soldiers in disguise. Lieutenant-General H.J. Martin, the chief of staff of the South African Defence Force, promptly denied this. Zambia deported the five men on 12 January 1968, having given them a taste of the local gaol.

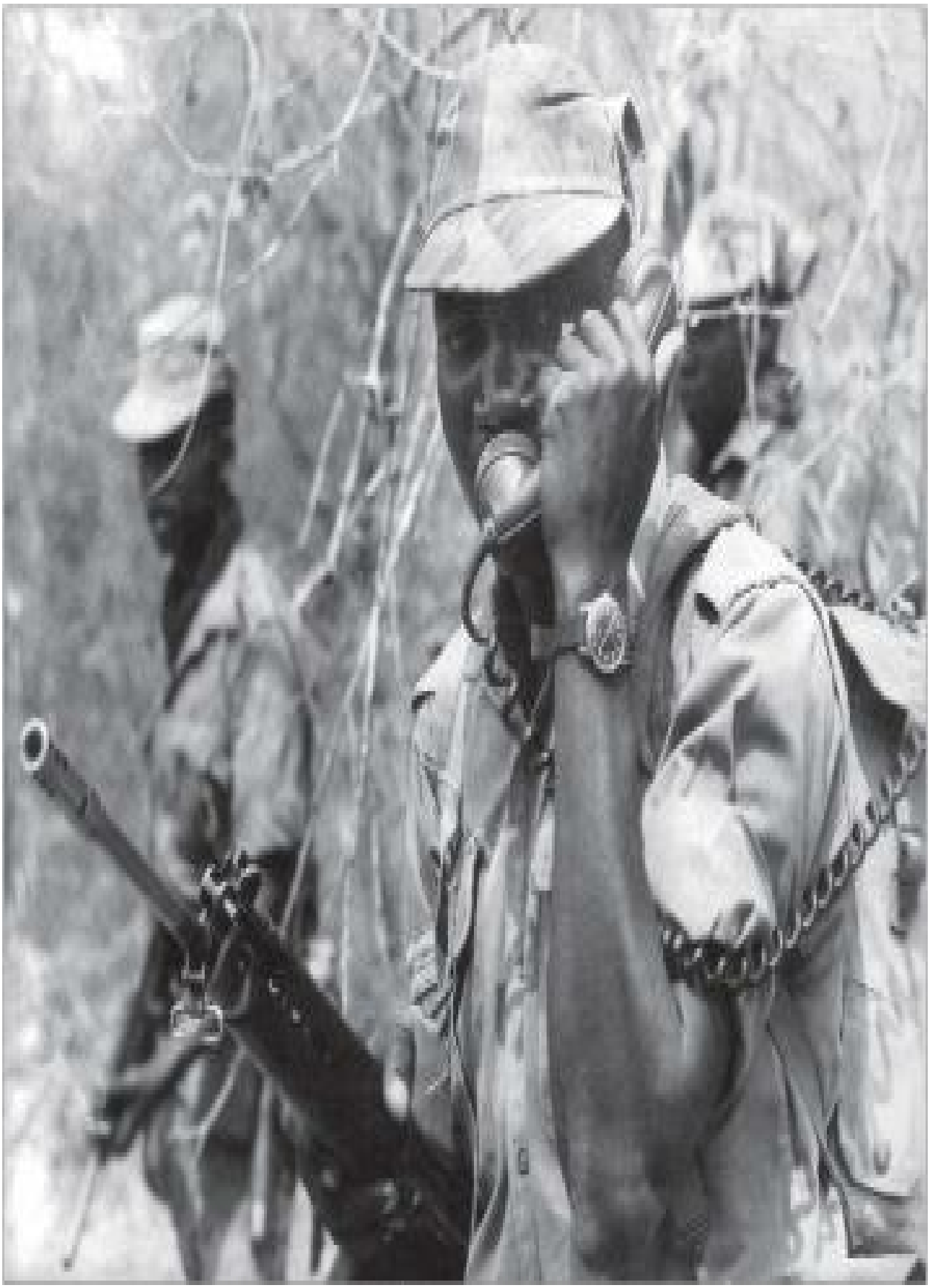
What Kaunda did not know was that ZANU had a lucky escape when Operation Sculpture was aborted. With the intention of blowing up the ZANU headquarters in Lusaka, three SAS operators had been flown to a private landing ground 64 kilometres from Lusaka. Their PRAW pilot, Peter Scales, a former British army veteran of the Arnhem débâcle, had managed to land them unnoticed in the evening of 30 December 1967 by using a glide approach and the distraction of a noisy party in the airfield's clubhouse. A local agent met the SAS operators and drove them to Lusaka where they were unable to achieve anything because the ZANU headquarters was brightly lit and the scene of a faction fight. Lacking a planned alternative target, the SAS operators withdrew to Lusaka airport where Scales brought his Cessna 206 in unnoticed the next evening, this time tucked in behind a Zambian Airways flight. The SAS team was flown to Kariba to be debriefed by Major Dudley Coventry and Jack Berry of the CIO.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

ZAPU'S 'SIPOLILO' CAMPAIGN: OPERATION CAULDRON, JANUARY–APRIL 1968

What everyone on the Rhodesian side had missed was the first major incursion since Operation Nickel by another combined ZAPU-SAANC force. Its task was to subvert the Sipolilo, Mazoe, Mount Darwin, Mtoko and Mrewa areas of northeastern Mashonaland. A reason for the failure to detect it was simple. The Chewore–Zambezi confluence was the boundary between the border-control units patrolling east from Chirundu and west from Kanyemba. To avoid a possible mistaken exchange of 'friendly' fire, both units would end their patrols short of the confluence. This left a gap that the next ZAPU-MK incursion would exploit.

The ZAPU-MK operation had begun in November 1967 with a westward search for a crossing point from the Zambian bank of the Zambezi between Feira on the Mozambican border in the east to the bridge at Chirundu. The three-man reconnaissance team, one ZAPU and two MK operators, decided the most suitable place was opposite the Chewore river confluence, 60 kilometres east of Mana Pools. Whether this choice was influenced by the Rhodesian patrol pattern is not recorded.



An RAR stick leader on the radio. Photo Masodja

RAR troops prepare for contact, Operation Cauldron, 1968. Photo Masodja

The ZAPU-MK joint command, ZAPU's Dumiso Dabengwa and MK's Zola Zembe, then sent across eleven civilian-clothed, armed men (five ZAPU, including Happyman George Marire and Report Sibanda, and six MK cadres) to find a route from the Chewore confluence to the Zambezi escarpment in the direction of Sipolilo.

Once this was accomplished, a force of 125 men (87 ZAPU and 38 MK) crossed in three waves on 28 December 1967 and 3 and 5 January 1968, using a canoe, a flat-bottomed boat and three inflatable rafts. On the first foray, one raft overturned, spilling weapons and supplies. The five-man crew was saved but not their cargo. Given the first task of constructing and equipping five Vietnamese-patterned base camps spaced along the infiltration route from the Zambezi to the foot of the escarpment, the men thereafter tramped to and from the Zambezi to collect the war matériel and supplies being ferried across.

Next, on 7 January 1968, 100 men of the joint force, commanded by Moffat Hadebe of ZAPU, were assembled at camp 1 in Rhodesia, close to the Chewore confluence. Hadebe was the veteran ZAPU operator who had attacked Farewell Roberts on Dube ranch on 14 September 1964. He had been difficult to detain then and he would prove again in the coming months how difficult it was to catch him.

The ZAPU-MK group was addressed by Joe Modise, the MK commander, who exhorted them to "spring at the throats of the enemies". He ordered them to subvert the mass of the population in preparation for the day when the ZAPU high command in Lusaka would signal the uprising which would overthrow the white Rhodesian government and allow the ANC of South Africa to go on to unseat the South African government. Modise added a warning that the joint high command would shoot dead anyone who surrendered.

2 Commando 1RLI at Karoi, preparing to deploy on Operation Cauldron, 1968.

That done, Modise, Dabengwa, Abraham Nkiwane and Report Ndhlovu trudged southward to inspect the site of camp 3, on the hill near the Chigusa river. They stayed in the area for a week before returning to Zambia on 14 January, having overseen the division of the force into three platoons: A was headquarters, intelligence, reconnaissance and security platoon and B and C were the fighting platoons. B Platoon was given a MK commander and the other two were commanded by ZAPU.

Because the portering of supplies was too slow to sustain life in the tough, hot Zambezi valley, a considerable amount of game, including elephant, rhino and zebra had to be shot to feed the infiltrators. The lack of food forced Hadebe, on 20 January 1968, to dispatch four men to Lusaka to demand more. The resupply of food only arrived on Friday, 2 February and took a considerable effort by the 35 men and women of the resupply platoon to carry into Rhodesia. Its arrival, however, allowed the construction of camp 4, some 35 kilometres from the Zambezi, on the slopes of Chirambakadoma mountain (soon to be the site of a Rhodesian army radio relay position) and camp 5 on the Maura river at the foot of the escarpment. Hadebe was in radio contact with Lusaka until mid-February when his transmitter broke down and had to be carried back to Lusaka for repair. The lack of food in early March would again inhibit the camp construction and lead Hadebe to risk sending a foraging party up over the escarpment to the Mangula white farming area, where they managed to buy considerable quantities of food from a store on Tiripano estate on 6 March without raising suspicion. A second party was sent out on Wednesday, 13 March. Although the Rhodesian authorities remained unaware of the incursion, the paths the intruders were creating as they moved back and forth could not pass unnoticed forever. Part of the reason they had escaped detection for three months was that a particularly heavy rainy season, from November to March, had flooded rivers and delayed the messages reaching Salisbury from the CIO’s agents in Zambia.

D.W. Lardner-Burke, the minister of law and order, underlined Rhodesian complacency when he proclaimed in the legislative assembly on 24 January that the Rhodesian security forces had “up to now forestalled every attempt by those terrorist thugs to penetrate far within our borders”. He was careful enough, however, to warn that the insurgency was not yet over and for that reason he was asking the legislative assembly for a further three months’ extension to the state of emergency, including preventive detention. To bolster his argument, he quoted unwittingly from the Zimbabwe Review of 4 November 1967 that expressed the intention of intensifying the “guerrilla activity in existing guerrilla zones”.

The luck of the ZAPU-MK expeditionary force finally ran out at 1000 hours on Thursday, 14 March, when David Scammell, a National Parks officer, noticed that game was scarce and disturbed in the Chewore safari area near the Uti river, 30 kilometres west of the Angwa river bridge. As this was a certain sign that someone was hunting, he cast around for tracks. He soon found two fresh, tell-tale chevron and American bar pattern bootprints superimposed on older tracks on a well-worn path between the 1,100-metre-high Chirambakadoma mountain to the north and the Zambezi escarpment to the south. The ZAPU-MK intruders had repeated the mistake of Operation Nickel: camping in an uninhabited area where their tracks stood out and where their hunting disturbed the game. Between 21 January and 12 March they had killed 105 animals: elephant, rhino, buffalo and antelope. By taking only the meat of the elephants and leaving the tusks, they hazarded further advertising their presence. Tracking northward for ten kilometres toward Chirambakadoma, the source of the Uti river, Scammell and his African rangers soon encountered a torn red, white and blue Soviet label, a button and two sugar packets. At 1600 hours Scammell returned to his lower Hunyani base and radioed his findings to Sipolilo.

At 0900 hours on Friday, 15 March Detective Inspector Johne Fletcher, the SB officer in charge of the Lomagundi district, Inspector Eric Saul, the member in charge at Chirundu, and Superintendent Ted Mallon, the officer in charge of border control, were flown by helicopter to meet Scammell to examine his findings. They confirmed that the spoor was three to five days old and that the track was made by at least ten men. What they did not notice was that they were being watched by four ZAPU-MK cadres who alerted

their commanders who were close by.

Lieutenant Ronald Marillier's 14 Platoon E Company 1RAR, then on border control, was flown in from Chirundu by RRAF helicopter to support BSAP elements led by an African civilian tracker following the southbound tracks toward the Ntumbe river. Fletcher ordered BSAP ground coverage units to operate in the southern and western areas of Karoi, Chundu and Kasangare. The BSAP at Sipolilo were ordered to cover the east. Patrolling of the Zambezi river to the north was undertaken and aerial reconnaissance began by a newly acquired Agusta Lockheed 60 light aircraft which the RRAF named 'Trojan'.

On Saturday, 16 March JOC Cauldron was established at the small northern country town of Karoi. Its landing ground was designated a forward airfield and began to receive aircraft. An SAS tracker team arrived in the helicopters flown by Cyril White and Brian Penton. Flying officers Christopher Weinmann and Tony van Rooyen-Smit arrived in two armed Provosts. Two further helicopters, a Trojan, a PRAW aircraft, an SAP helicopter and a Cessna 185 followed. Four more Trojans would arrive later. C Squadron SAS, 1 and 3 commandos 1RLI, two BSAP PATU sticks from Salisbury and other BSAP elements were deployed by road. The RLI units had been hastily recalled from a training exercise, Operation Spider Web, in the Pfungwe Tribal Trust Land.

That morning, while Marillier's 14 Platoon and the BSAP personnel followed numerous tracks in the Uti river area, a smaller tracking party was detached to follow the spoor of two people northward. It was thought they could be either defectors from the larger group or porters.

At 1145 hours the southbound track yielded an ambush position littered with a page from a diary, a black plastic button, an empty Tortoise Shell tobacco packet and a week-old chevron boot spoor. Farther on, the ashes of three small fires were encountered, then a Chinese-pattern water bottle.

At 1345 hours the northbound trackers found fresh spoor of 15–30 men heading south and then a three-day-old camp below the western face of Chirambakadoma mountain. A bottle of oil was found a kilometre and a half to the north.

At 1440 hours the southbound tracker spotted spoor also heading south from another two- or three-day-old camp littered with wrapping paper for explosives. As the camp was laid out in the MK manner of Operation Nickel, it appeared that the quarry comprised 20–30 ZAPU-MK men.

During Sunday morning, 17 March the northern tracking team discovered a two- or three-week-old base camp some three kilometres south of Chirambakadoma, containing a radio battery, a saw and nails and signs of the erection of tents. At 1530 hours the trackers discovered a recently abandoned camp two kilometres to the northwest of Chirambakadoma. It contained 40 sleeping places and fresh meat, a kitbag, a Chinese-type cup, two jackets, a camouflage face net, a pair of boots, a water bottle, two shovels, 12 7.62mm rounds, a home-made boobytrap, a compass, two sticks of TNT, foreign wrapping paper, a piece of paper with the date 13 March 1968, a list of addresses of local Africans and a tube of Cuban toothpaste. To the south a third tracking party located some Cuban coins near the Makuku river.

As they were estimated to be just four–five hours behind their quarry, Marillier's 14 Platoon was reinforced by 12 men of Lieutenant Christopher Pearce's 13 Troop 3 Commando 1RLI, flown by helicopter from Major Hugh Rowley's 3 Commando tactical headquarters on the road near the Uti river. Marillier and Pearce found an abandoned camp by the Ntumbe river with 36-hour-old spoor of three–four men. These tracks were followed southward until they were lost halfway between the Ntumbe and Maura rivers. The day's march had left Pearce suffering from heatstroke.

Another patrol found the remains of a bushbuck in a camp just south of the Maura. This patrol was airlifted to 3 Commando's headquarters for the night while a separate patrol pursued the spoor of seven men from this camp to the foot of the escarpment six kilometres west of the Angwa river. This patrol was then also flown to 3 Commando's headquarters.

That evening BSAP ground coverage personnel learned that on 6 March two Africans had purchased large quantities of food from a store on Tiripano estate, 40 kilometres to the south in the northern Mangula area. Because this, and the description of their clothing, indicated that they were terrorists, Detective Section Officer Brian Stevenson-Baker was immediately dispatched from Sinoia to investigate.

JOC Cauldron concluded that 40 terrorists were heading south after earlier backtracking northward. The group found farther to the south appeared to have divided, with three members walking eastward and seven men going southeast. It was presumed that they were probably an advance party for the main group. The follow-up of all available trails was planned with stop groups along the east bank of the Angwa river between the Angwa's Mana Pools and the confluence of Mukwichi river, from there west along the Mukwichi then northwest to Matsikiti and north to the border security road, also along the Chewore river. An intensification of the aerial reconnaissance was ordered to slow down the terrorist movements.

Early on Monday, 18 March, the Rhodesian security forces had their first success when, at the Tiripano store, the BSAP arrested five ZAPU and one MK men, armed with six pistols and two grenades. Three were Soviet-trained: chief field security and intelligence officer, John Mnkandla (alias Lucky) and Wilson Chinuye (alias Eric Zonde). George Nashu Masuku had trained in Algeria after escaping from Khami prison in Bulawayo in April 1965 while serving a seven-year sentence for murder. Cuban-trained Happyman George Marire was wanted for offences under the Law and Order (Maintenance) Amendment Act. He was a member of the reconnaissance unit that had maintained liaison within the group and with Lusaka. The fifth ZAPU man was John Mfanyana Ndhlovu. The MK member was the Soviet- and Tanzanian-trained MK cadre, Sipho Mkhize, from Durban.

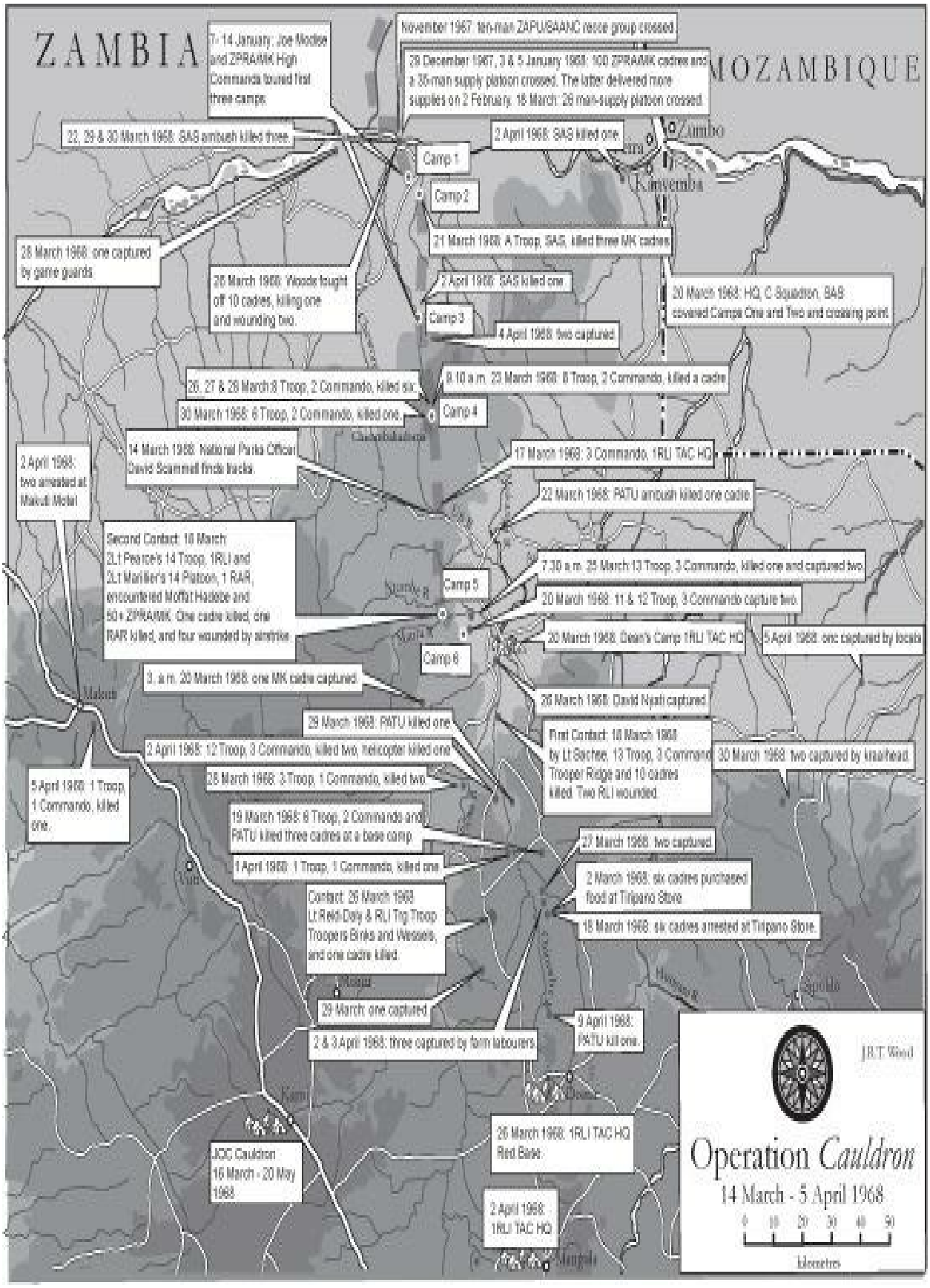
By 1730 hours the interrogation of Mnkandla had revealed some of the history of the crossing of the 100-strong ZAPU-MK force in December 1967, their order of battle, their training, the ZAPU camps around Lusaka and elsewhere, their five camps and arms caches within Rhodesia and the crossing point. He confessed that he and his five companions were part of a 14-man intelligence and reconnaissance section responsible for purchasing a large quantity of foodstuffs to be carried by eight of their number to camp 5 in advance of the further infiltration of the entire group. The other six members of the intelligence-reconnaissance group, he said, had been ordered to the Sipolilo Tribal Trust Land to establish a base camp and to stock it with food in preparation for the arrival of the entire group. Their operational areas would include Mrewa, Mazoe, Sinoia and Sipolilo districts where they would indoctrinate and train the masses before attacking military installations. He

warned also that his commander and his medical officer had told him about another 100-man ZAPU force, including an 82mm mortar battery, infiltrating Rhodesia west of the Victoria Falls in December 1967. Later it was learned that the weapons and their bombs were deemed too heavy for a river crossing and were retained at Nkomo camp on Ndhlovu farm near Lusaka.

Simultaneously, with the arrests on Tiripano estate, fresh tracks of the ZAPU-MK men who had been constructing camp 6 were discovered west of the flooding Angwa river, five kilometres south of Mana Pools. The SAS trackers, Sergeant Joe Conway, and corporals Stretch Franklin, Hennie Pretorius and Darryl Watt, supported by Lieutenant Albert Sachse's 11 Troop 3 Commando 1RLI, set off in pursuit. At 0800 hours the leading tracker spotted a cadre and opened fire. The ZAPU-MK group went to ground below a crest. Their return fire wounded Trooper D.H. Woods and pinned him down in the open. Sachse's flanking attack was beaten off with the loss of Trooper Eric Ridge, the nephew of the secretary for defence, E.C.W. Trollip, and the first RLI soldier to die in action. Sly Masuku (alias Sola Mabela), a ZAPU cadre, hiding behind an anthill, had shot Ridge in the back after he passed him.

Despite Sachse destroying an RPD machine gun, a second attack resulted in Trooper C.J. Swanepoel being seriously wounded in the thigh, forcing Sachse to call for a casualty evacuation by helicopter and strafing of the ZAPU-MK position by a Provost flown by Flying Officer Anthony E. van Rooyen-Smit. Covered by machine-gun fire from Flying Officer Mark F. McLean's Alouette III helicopter and reinforced by five men from 3 Commando headquarters, Sachse's third assault succeeded at the cost of the wounding of Trooper E. Koekemoer in the hand and arm. Ten ZAPU-MK cadres lay dead. The Soviet-trained MK cadres were Jampie Brooklyn (from the Transvaal), Sitwell Mayona, Stanley Tsotsi, Patrick Nsele and Jack Goniwe from the Cape (Goniwe had also trained in Ethiopia and Algeria); the Cuban-trained ZAPU cadres were Pilot Nsale, Josiah Moyo and Mache Njovu. One body was unidentified. Sachse recovered an RPD machine gun, seven AK-47 and two SKS rifles, a Tokarev pistol, 4,284 7.62mm intermediate rounds, 322 7.62mm pistol rounds, 31 magazines, 31 grenades, 43 grenade primers, 13 blocks of TNT, detonators, wooden boobytraps, electrical wire, safety fuse and eight haversacks. A follow-up of the escapees commenced. Later, on 25

March, the body of one would surface in a pool in the river. It had been half-eaten by a crocodile. Sachse’s reward for his bravery and skill would be a Bronze Cross of Rhodesia.


ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE
November 1967: ten-man ZAPU/ANC recce group crossed.
29 December 1967, 3 & 5 January 1968: 100 ZPRA/MK cadres and a 35-man supply platoon crossed. The latter delivered more supplies on 2 February. 18 March: 26 man-supply platoon crossed.
7- 14 January: Joe Modise and ZPRA/MK High Command toured first three camps.
22, 29 & 30 March 1968: SAS ambush killed three.
2 April 1968: SAS killed one.
Zambo
Kanyemba
Camp 1
Camp 2
21 March 1968: A Troop, SAS, killed three MK cadres.
28 March 1968: one captured by game guards.
28 March 1968: Woods fought off 10 cadres, killing one and wounding two.
2 April 1968: SAS killed one.
30 March 1968: HQ, C Squadron, SAS covered Camps One and Two and crossing point.
Camp 3
4 April 1968: two captured.
26, 27 & 28 March 8 Troop, 2 Commando, killed six.
8.10 a.m. 23 March 1968: 8 Troop, 2 Commando, killed a cadre.
30 March 1968: 8 Troop, 2 Commando, killed one.
Camp 4
14 March 1968: National Parks Officer David Scammell finds tracks.
17 March 1968: 3 Commando, 1RLI TAC HQ
2 April 1968: two arrested at Makuti Motel
22 March 1968: PATU ambush killed one cadre.
Second Contact: 18 March 2Lt Pearce's 14 Troop, 1RLI and 2Lt Mariller's 14 Platoon, 1 RAR, encountered Moffat Hadebe and 50+ ZPRA/MK. One cadre killed, one RAR killed, and four wounded by airstrike.
7.30 a.m. 25 March 13 Troop, 3 Commando, killed one and captured two.
Camp 5
20 March 1968: 11 & 12 Troop, 3 Commando capture two.
20 March 1968: Dean's Camp 1RLI TAC HQ
5 April 1968: one captured by locals
Camp 6
3. a.m. 20 March 1968: one MK cadre captured.
28 March 1968: David Ngati captured.
29 March 1968: PATU killed one.
First Contact: 18 March 1968 by Lt Sachee, 13 Troop, 3 Command Trooper Ridge and 10 cadres killed. Two RLI wounded.
30 March 1968: two captured by knalhead.
2 April 1968: 12 Troop, 3 Commando, killed two, helicopter killed one.
5 April 1968: 1 Troop, 1 Commando, killed one.
28 March 1968: 3 Troop, 1 Commando, killed two.
19 March 1968: 8 Troop, 2 Commando and PATU killed three cadres at a base camp.
27 March 1968: two captured.
1 April 1968: 1 Troop, 1 Commando, killed one.
2 March 1968: six cadres purchased food at Tiripano Store.
Contact: 26 March 1968 Lt Reid-Daly & RLI Trg Troop Troopers Binks and Wessels, and one cadre killed.
18 March 1968: six cadres arrested at Tiripano Store.
29 March: one captured.
2 & 3 April 1968: three captured by farm labourers.
9 April 1968: PATU kill one.
26 March 1968: 1RLI TAC HQ Red Baks.
JOC Cauldron 16 March - 20 May 1968.
2 April 1968: 1RLI TAC HQ
J.R.T. Wood
Operation Cauldron
14 March - 5 April 1968
0 10 20 30 40 50
Kilometres

At 1300 hours the unsuspecting African civilian tracker leading the RLI-RAR group of Pearce and Mariller, climbed a small hill flanking a bend in the Maura river and found himself in the middle of camp 5. At that moment the ZAPU commander, Moffat Hadebe, was asleep in the camp, having arrived from camp 4 at 0100 hours. This left Ralph Mkano in command of the 60-man ZAPU-MK garrison hidden in the mopane trees. The tracker turned and fled, leaving Pearce's point man, Lance-Corporal Dennis Croukamp, facing an armed cadre at the distance of ten metres. Their wild exchange of fire prompted a daunting fusillade from the hidden cadres, driving Croukamp and the rest of 13 Troop into cover. Hadebe was awakened by the sound of shooting and immediately went to ground. Croukamp deployed his section, sited his 60mm mortar and, having consulted Pearce, crawled forward and threw two grenades while 13 Troop skirmished forward. A storm of fire stopped them. Covered by fire from 13 Troop, Marillier and his RAR men attempted a flanking attack across open ground. The heavy ZAPU-MK response killed Corporal Erisha, wounded Platoon Warrant Officer Herod and scattered the inexperienced soldiers, some of whom reappeared a day or two later. (See map on first page of colour section)

After being pinned down for an hour and a half, Pearce decided to withdraw. He had Croukamp mark the terrorist position with a phosphorus grenade for covering machine-gun fire from the helicopters of McLean and Flight Lieutenant John Barnes while 13 Troop reached the safety of a ditch. Calling an airstrike, Pearce withdrew his men to join Marillier some 200 metres from the ZAPU-MK position.

Acting as a forward air controller, Barnes directed the bombing and strafing of the camp by two Provosts. The ZAPU-MK force fought back, hitting a Provost. McLean then directed Squadron Leader Bill Jelley and Flying Officer Preller Geldenhuys, flying de Havilland Vampires, as they blasted the ZAPU-MK position five times with 60lb rockets and 20mm cannon fire. A bombing run with 28lb Mk1 fragmentation bombs by John Rogers, flying a Canberra bomber, followed. Drifting target marker smoke laid by McLean, however, misled Rogers and some of his 96 bombs landed near Pearce's troops, wounding his troop sergeant, Timothy J. Baker, and troopers Mike

Barrowman, T.D. ‘Cocky’ Binks, Ian M. Ferreira, M.C. Viljoen and R.A. Penrose. A Hunter strike was called off.

These airstrikes had not, silenced Hadebe’s men. Despite being reinforced by two RLI four-man sticks and, after mounting a second flanking attack and a 60mm mortar bombardment, Pearce and Marillier were still unable to advance and could only hold their positions through the cold night. Under cover of darkness, however, Hadebe withdrew remnants of his force, split them into four groups and instructed them to make their way to Sipolilo via devious routes.

At dawn on Wednesday, 19 March, Pearce and Marillier attacked camp 5 again. It was empty apart from the bodies of Maboleka Moyo of ZAPU and RAR Corporal Erisha. A sweep of the camp yielded bloodied clothing and an extraordinary amount of weapons and matériel but notably no food. Found were 178 grenades, 124 grenade primers, 14 RPG rockets, 144 slabs of Soviet TNT, 200 two-ounce cylinders of TNT, 16 kilograms of plastic explosive, ten rocket propellants, AK and SKS rifles, one PPSH and two M25 sub-machine guns, 75 assorted magazines, 51 wooden boobytraps, 30 pounds of plastic explosives, 28,000 7.62mm and 9mm rounds, numerous detonators, electrical adaptors and wire, packs, clothing and miscellaneous equipment for some 50 men. A later visit would uncover more, some hidden in the trees. The fighting qualities of the young white RLI troopers earned them the accolade from the wounded PWO Herod who told Sergeant Tim Baker that “they have faces of boys, but they fight like lions.” For their bravery, Marillier, McLean and Croukamp were awarded the Bronze Cross of Rhodesia.

The Rhodesian government immediately sought to capitalize on the success, flying in journalists and high-level visitors, including the flamboyant P.K van der Byl, the deputy minister of information, to Hadebe’s bombed camp, made all the more dramatic by the blood-red sap oozing from the shattered mopane trees. This provoked the ZAPU external leader, James Chikerema, to explain in Lusaka that the mission of the ZAPU-MK force was to wrest control of Rhodesia from the white minority and to capture Ted Milton, the Rhodesian hangman. The next day Chikerema confirmed that the purpose of the ZAPU-SAANC alliance was for waging the “second great offensive in the liberation war”. The London Daily Mirror responded by tellingly predicting on Friday,

22 March, that “Rhodesia is at the dawn of its Vietnam”. To be entirely accurate, of course, the intensification of the war had begun with Operation Nickel in August 1967 and the armed operations dated back to 1962.

Before then, also on Wednesday, 19 March, the captured John Mnkandla led 6 Troop of Major Leon Jacobs’s 2 Commando and PATU members 15 kilometres northward from Tiripano estate north of Mangula to a base camp. There the troops shot dead the Soviet-trained MK cadre, Kenneth Mzati from the Cape province. Mnkandla was the next to die when he tried to escape after revealing where he and his men had hidden an AK rifle, five Uzi sub-machine guns and eight Soviet grenades. A third man was killed in the vicinity. Farther north the bootprints of three men from Sachse’s contact were followed to the Chituhwe river, an eastern tributary of the Angwa.

Spoor on a track heading from camp 5 prompted JOC Cauldron to fly 13 Troop 3 Commando south by helicopter where they found an empty camp at the foot of the escarpment. High in the mountains, 2 Troop 1 Commando laid an ambush five kilometres on the track south from it. Just after midnight they captured the Chinese-trained MK political commissar, Dan Kwalo from Durban, armed with an AK rifle. He was one of 45 men of the B and C platoons in camp 5 who had fled during the RLI-RAR attack and before the airstrike. His intention was to return to South Africa via Mozambique. He revealed that, as there was no pre-planned rendezvous, he expected his companions to return to camp 4 at Chirambakadoma where they had based the longest and where they knew weapons were cached. He predicted that none would head for camp 6 because few knew where it was since Sachse’s 11 Troop had killed eleven out of the 12 men who had built it. Finally, he added that his companions were already demoralized by the shortage of food.

The arrests on Tiripano estate and the follow-up from the contacts there led JOC Cauldron to set up a tactical headquarters at Mangula and allocated to it 2 Commando, two Ferret armoured cars of Support Group 1RLI, three PATU sticks (each stick comprised four white policemen and an African constable) and a helicopter. The SAS based their headquarters at Kanyemba on the Zambezi near the Mozambican border and sent their A, B and C troops to cut-off positions along the southern bank from there to the Chewore river confluence. A stop group covered the west bank of the Angwa north of its

confluence with the Mukwichi river, while 1 Troop 1 Commando patrolled the east–west game fence (designed to stop the spread of the tsetse fly). Two Ferret armoured cars and Marillier's 14 Platoon E Company 1RAR were dispatched to Makuti. Five Trojan aircraft and Section 2 of the BSAP ground coverage reinforced JOC Cauldron. It was thought that the main terrorist group, albeit in sub-groups of two to three, was still moving south toward the game fence just beyond Mana Pools, perhaps to regroup at a rendezvous later. Camped at the foot of the escarpment, 3 Commando was ordered to follow up on the main group at first light with other units in stop positions. The search continued in the Mangula area.

During the night of 19–20 March two fugitives were captured in Doma safari area, 20 kilometres southeast of the Sachse contact. They were armed with an AK, an RPD, 419 rounds and anti-personnel mines. In the morning a hide was located in the Mangula area and one cadre was sighted but evaded the sweep. Then, in the afternoon, near Tiripano store, 2 Commando wounded and captured Soviet-trained Archion Ndhlovu (alias Godfrey Kumalo).

Simultaneously, 11 Troop and Second Lieutenant Jeremy Strong's 12 Troop 3 Commando, having followed spoor all day, reached camp 6. It contained four packs, five groundsheets, three American incendiary grenades, eight Soviet offensive grenades, 22 slabs of TNT, two boobytraps, 1,600 7.62mm rounds, four anti-personnel mines and miscellaneous equipment. Tracks were followed up the steep slopes and gullies until 1530 hours when the troops were greeted by a burst of RPD machine-gun fire and a grenade, thrown from a small base camp. Outflanked, two ZAPU cadres, Soviet-trained Gilbert Sigqswana Mpofu and Cuban-trained Nhanqawabela Chuma (alias Nqabeli Mhlanga), surrendered. When they were being loaded onto a helicopter, a third man appeared and fired at it. By the time his spoor was found it was too dark to follow it.

The intelligence gained governed the deployment of the forces. Half of a 3 Commando troop was positioned on the track leading south from camp 5. The SAS stick ambushing the Chewore river mouth was reinforced. The SAS headquarters at Kanyemba was given a helicopter and patrols were increased in the districts flanking the contact area. Territorial troops and police reservists were added to JOC Cauldron's strength. 3 Commando, supported

by the BSAP, repositioned its headquarters to Dean's tsetse-fly-control camp, on the eastern bank of the Angwa, 15 kilometres south of Mana Pools, on the game fence at the mouth of the Angwa valley cutting back through the escarpment. The RRAF sent its forward air control personnel to Dean's camp the next day. JOC Cauldron ordered all tracking to continue and positioned stops and ambushes. It planned to have troops search and ambush camps 1 to 4 and to have the RRAF drop leaflets. The tally was 14 kills and six captures at the cost of two Rhodesian soldiers killed and six wounded. What was noted was that none of the fanaticism of Operation Nickel had been encountered but it was felt it was too soon to be certain.

Having no contingency plan, the scattered survivors had to live on their wits. Patrol Officer Garth von Horsten's dog, Leon (the tracker dog that had fled on Operation Nickel), caught one fugitive. The vigour of the hunt was fuelled by the rumour that the fugitives were carrying Rhodesian bank notes. The belief that Hadebe had £11,000 on him concentrated minds in particular and there was only disappointment when he was eventually captured by the Portuguese in Mozambique and returned penniless.

Not to be outdone by ZAPU, ZANU officials in Lusaka claimed on Thursday, 21 March, that their forces had killed 13 white soldiers and had destroyed three vehicles in an ambush on the previous day, 20 March. Although there was no substance to this, six days later they would launch a further attempt to infiltrate Rhodesia.

The MK suffered important casualties on 21 March after Lieutenant J.M. Russell's A Troop SAS, following tracks southward from the Chewore confluence, discovered camp 1. Their report that more tracks led on from it and that smoke could be seen to the south prompted the SAS to order D Troop to be flown in to follow them. At midday D Troop found camp 2, a well-constructed defensive position for 80–100 men, eight kilometres southeast of the Chewore confluence. Moving toward it, A Troop's tracker, Corporal Vernon McLuckie, encountered fresh bootprints. Fortune favoured him because, having lost the spoor shortly thereafter when a large herd of buffalo erased it, he chose a course which resulted in his men surprising a 31-strong ZAPU-MK group in the thick bush. The group included 26 fresh men who had crossed from Zambia on Monday, 18 March. Among them were ten

MK high-ranking cadres. They were lying in ambush on their own tracks when McLuckie approached from the rear.

In the confused exchange of fire, Trooper P.W. Thorogood suffered a slight head wound and a bullet lodged in the lung of the radio operator, Trooper Don Junner. In return, the troop sergeant, Jannie Boltman, and Lance-Corporal Vincent Bowyer killed Michael Pohe, David Molife and Benson Nsele. Pohe and Molife were members of the MK high command in Lusaka. Nsele was the political commissar of the MK reconnaissance group that had been provisioning the ZAPU-MK force since December 1967. The survivors having scattered, an Alouette flown by Flight Lieutenant Mick Grier was summoned to evacuate the SAS wounded and the three MK dead to SAS tactical headquarters at Kanyemba. Fleeing northward, the mortally wounded MK cadre, Marshall Vorster, headed toward the Chewore confluence. His body was found the next morning. Four other escapees, including Gerald Mtolo (alias Reggie Hlatshwayo), fled westward. Three of them, but not Mtolo, would surrender on 19 April.

At 0645 hours on Friday, 22 March, a kilometre west of the Chewore confluence, the SAS ambushed approximately 20 terrorists and killed one and wounded two seriously. The follow-up found three AK rifles and three packs. JOC Cauldron contemplated planting poisoned biltong (jerky) at ZAPU-MK camps 1 and 2. The JOC, however, was more concerned about finding camp 3 and had a helicopter fly a captured man to identify it. Otherwise the JOC ordered the BSAP to cover all rural stores and eating-houses south and east of the Sarawanda range and close to the Hunyani river in the Dande Tribal Trust Land. A roadblock was established on the main road from Sipolilo to Gutsa in the escarpment and the BSAP ground coverage units searched the Mangula and Karoi areas. Fresh tracks were located near the Maura river. Patrols and ambushes continued. The SAS had their A, C and D troops cross-graining the area four kilometres south of the Zambezi and five kilometres west of the Chewore river. 3 Commando headquarters remained at Dean’s camp. 1 Commando’s 1, 2 and 4 troops were covering the escarpment south of camps 5 and 6. Three Troop was at camp 5 below Chirambakadoma. Border-control troops were checking the Rukomechi and Sapi rivers for signs of further infiltration. Two Portuguese army platoons with air support were covering the border.

JOC Cauldron did not know yet where the ZAPU-MK were but had established that their crossing point was at the Chewore mouth with the first staging camp 500 metres to the east and some 800 metres south of the Zambezi river. The JOC also knew something of the history of the incursion since December 1967. What was worrying was that there were hints of further ZAPU and ZANU incursions.

At 0200 hours on Saturday, 23 March Jairos Nherera Chintsika, a ZAPU cadre born in Sipolilo, was killed in a PATU ambush two kilometres east of the Makanga bridge en route to ZAPU-MK camp 4. The Sinoia Police Reserve PATU members, Lindsay, Marillier, Hoskins-Davies and Hewat, had been tracking Chintsika and a companion on the previous day and had anticipated their likely route. Chintsika had been part of the 14-man group encountered at Tiripano store on 18 March. His companion escaped and at dawn the PATU began a follow-up of his tracks.

Attempting to enter camp 4 at 0910 hours, a cadre was shot by the sentry of a ten-man ambush left behind when Lieutenant W.M. Thompson's 8 Troop 2 Commando ostentatiously withdrew. His companion escaped into the thick bush. His tracks were followed.

In the afternoon a considerable arms cache was located 18 kilometres northwest of Chirambakadoma and half a kilometre west of the Chewore river. The whereabouts of camp 3 was still being sought and a camp 22 acres in extent was found 13 kilometres north of Chirambakadoma. As it had a series of cleverly camouflaged pits, measuring five feet long by four feet wide by five feet deep, a considerable quantity of arms, ammunition and equipment was expected to be uncovered in the next day's search.

Camp 5 was searched again and yielded two RPG-2 rocket launchers, an AK and three SKS rifles, a PPSH and six Czech M25 sub-machine guns. Two troops of 2 Commando were redeployed from Mangula to Karoi. The ground coverage to the east was increased. Farther south a sweep uncovered a four-day-old camp in the Doma safari area ten kilometres north of Tiripano estate but it yielded nothing. In the evening Sergeant M.D. McGaghey and two other members of the SAS headquarters had an unsuccessful contact at the village of Malamo, west of Kanyemba, but found an SKS rifle with a shattered butt, ammunition, two grenades and a pack.

JOC Cauldron learned of the ZAPU-MK practice of signalling with three rifle shots at the Chewore mouth at 1830 hours to summon a boat from Zambia. The reply would be flashes from a red torch and then an orange rubber boat would cross. The Rhodesians intended to fire the shots to see if they could attract the boat.

It was also understood that the force they were encountering was a vanguard of an invasion by ZAPU personnel being trained at Morogoro camp in Tanzania. Intelligence agents had reported that large quantities of equipment including food, 24-hour ration packs and medical equipment were awaiting clearance by Zambian customs services. Unspecified heavy equipment had already been moved from Tanzania into Zambia. Because the OAU council of ministers' conference at Addis Ababa in February 1968 had passed a resolution authorizing the establishment of military advisers in operational areas, it was thought that it was possible that a number of "non-Bantu persons" might be encountered in future.

What was worrying Rhodesian army intelligence was a report of a conversation at Salisbury railway station on 20 March, between an army 'source' and Dr John Senior, an American Catholic missionary and an opponent of the Rhodesian government. Saying he had learned in Lusaka two or three days previously that the army was engaged with 100–110 'freedom fighters' who had crossed at the Chewore confluence, Senior asked for the details. He said his informant was Reid (assumed to be Major-General T.N.S. Reid, general officer commanding the Zambian army). Rhodesian intelligence concluded that, if it was Major-General Reid, it would indicate that the crossings had at least been made with the knowledge, if not the connivance, of the Zambian authorities. Reid was not known to be a supporter of Rhodesia.

In the Operation Cauldron area on Sunday, 24 March, sweeps and low-level aerial reconnaissance continued with no significant sightings. Two of the captured cadres with SB escorts were flown to all the camps. What was known was that there might be a ZANU incursion but as yet its whereabouts was unknown. A search at camp 1 produced three Czech M25 sub-machine guns, two haversacks, a Soviet S13 and two British Mills grenades, 17 TNT cartridges, four 200-gram TNT slabs, 102 7.62mm rounds, eight 9mm rounds

and six boobytraps. Camp 2 held a number of radio valves and high-frequency crystals. Near camp 3 the searchers found three boobytraps, 16 grenades, two RPG-2 rocket launchers, three RPG-2 rockets, an RPD magazine, 18 Tokarev magazines and 327 9mm rounds. Camp 4 at Chirambakadoma yielded 29 Soviet and American grenades, 182 TNT cartridges, 28 200-gram and ten 400-gram TNT slabs, two RPG-2 rockets, three RPG-2 propellants, two RPD magazines, three AK magazines, four boobytraps, 3,657 7.62mm rounds, 34 pairs of khaki trousers, 45 khaki shirts, 16 pairs of dark blue underpants, one camouflage overall, 22 groundsheets, 13 lamps, ten haversacks, 26 tins of food and 93 tins of yeast. Nearby an SKS rifle, 600 7.62mm rounds and three AK magazines were uncovered.

At 1815 hours the sentry of 8 Troop 2 Commando saw a cadre approaching his ambush of the track south of camp 4. He pulled his alarm cord to alert his sergeant but the man saw the movement and fled, pursued by bursts from the sentry's MAG.

Searches and ambushes at all the camps continued even though the cadres dispersed from camp 5 on 18 March, expected to have headed southeast to the Sipolilo area. Later in the night there was a fruitless contact at camp 4 itself with two to three cadres. To the north at 1930 hours the SAS had a contact at camp 1 and the next morning found an AK rifle with a shattered butt.

At 0730 hours that Monday morning, 25 March, while sweeping two kilometres northeast of camp 5 near the Ntumbe river, 13 Troop 3 Commando heard terrorists talking. Lance-Corporal Croukamp led a flanking attack during which one cadre was killed and two captured, one of whom was wounded. The captured men were starving after subsisting for a week on scarce wild fruit. They had last eaten at camp 4 on Sunday, 17 March and then only on powdered milk. When they had arrived at camp 5 later that Sunday only beans and powdered milk were available but none was given to them. They admitted that, like Dan Kwalo, they had fled camp 5 before the airstrike on 18 March. They confirmed that there was no contingency plan even though an attack had been expected because of the orbiting aircraft. They had decided initially to return to Zambia but realized they would be sent back on a further incursion. Consequently they had decided to head for

Sipolilo but knew nothing of the whereabouts of Hadebe or any others. JOC Cauldron learned from them more of the history of the incursion. They described the holding centre across the Zambezi in Zambia with its large concealed pit containing weapons, ammunition and explosives. They told how any cadre who was absent from his companions for longer than 12 hours would be presumed a deserter and would be shot on sight. They explained that the camps had defensive positions facing east and west, the expected direction of attacks, and how camp 3 had an alternate camp three and half kilometres to the east. Tactics and methods were also learned such as the use of silent signals, whistles, clicks of the tongue and passwords.

The continuing searches at camp 5 uncovered an SKS rifle, 944 7.62mm rounds, three AK magazines, an RPG-2 rocket, two grenade fuses, two TNT cartridges and one pack. Camp 1 yielded two boobytraps, 16 grenades, two RPD machine guns and a magazine, three RPG rockets, 28 Tokarev magazines and 29 9mm rounds.

JOC Cauldron positioned stop groups along the game fence bordering the Mukwichi Tribal Trust Land to the southwest and maintained constant aerial reconnaissance. Army headquarters ordered the roads north from Karoi, Mangula and Sipolilo to Kanyemba to be graded dangerous or ‘red’ with immediate effect.

Tuesday, 26 March was a day of mixed fortunes for all players in Operation Cauldron. Across the Angwa river from Dean’s camp, the first survivor of the 18 March airstrike, the ZAPU-MK B Platoon’s political commissar, David Nyati, was captured armed only with a Tokarev pistol. Revealing that he was a member of a group of 17 led by Hadebe, he confirmed what was gleaned from other prisoners, namely that the intention was to link up with a group of 16 in Sipolilo. JOC Cauldron responded by setting up a tactical headquarters at Doma, north of Mangula, known as Red Base. It also reinforced Mangula with two helicopters, two RLI troops, a PATU stick and local police reservists. Ten additional constables were sent to reinforce the ground coverage in the Sipolilo area and intensified patrolling, searches and ambushes were ordered in all the operational areas.

In the afternoon, David Nyati was induced to lead Lieutenant Ron Reid-Daly (the former RSM 1RLI and future commander of the Selous Scouts) to where

he had left his six comrades on Innisfree farm, 30 kilometres north of Mangula and eleven kilometres west of the Tiripano store. He was driven toward their base camp in a convoy carrying the 21-man ‘Daly Force’, recruits from Reid-Daly’s RLI Training Troop, supported by 14 PATU members to act as stop groups. To avoid alerting his quarry, Reid-Daly planned to leave the vehicles 1,700 metres southwest of the insurgents’ camp and to flank it on two sides before an assault force attacked it. Nyati contrived, however, to mislead. He said nothing as the vehicles drove past the target but Reid-Daly noticed his agitation and gathered the camp was close by on the left. Reid-Daly drove on until out of earshot. He then dismounted and led his troops southwestward through a field of maize. They emerged from the maize too far to the left, realigned and assaulted the camp at 1700 hours. Corporal Christopher Gough shot dead a cadre near the termite mound, behind which Nyati’s companions were sheltering. The rest of the troops only saw figures running away through the long veld grass and bushes evading Colour Sergeant Pretorius’s stop line. As they regrouped, the troops did not see Sola Mafela (the Soviet-trained deputy commander of the ZAPU-MK B Platoon) before he fired a burst from his RPD machine gun, killing Recruit R.A. Binks and Trooper C.D. Wessels, both 17 years old. Mafela escaped into the maize. Tracks were followed until nightfall. The public outcry at this loss meant that soldiers younger than 18 were withdrawn from operations.

Lieutenant Thompson’s 8 Troop 2 Commando enjoyed success. Thompson laid an ambush on the track to camp 4 and had his troop sergeant, Derick Fraser, and a half section cover the camp’s water source a couple of kilometres to the north. When Fraser heard a single shot to the northeast at 1300 hours, Thomson recalled him and his men to his position. Three more single shots were heard at 1600, 1630 and 1710 hours, apparently getting closer. Thompson sent out Corporal van der Riet and five men along the track leading north. Where the track crossed a streambed, the patrol saw two cadres approaching over a hill. The patrol laid an immediate ambush on the track but the two men disappeared and reappeared in the streambed examining footprints. One looked up and saw the ambush party. He started to run and was shot and wounded by Lance-Corporal Watson. The wounded man dropped his weapon and crawled up the bank where the patrol mortally wounded him. His companion reappeared 300 metres away beside the wounded man and was shot dead by a single shot from van der Riet. The

patrol recovered an AK and an SKS rifle, grenades and anti-personnel mines.

Simultaneously, however, the SAS were faring badly. At 1845 hours ten cadres surprised an SAS patrol preparing an ambush at the ZAPU-MK staging camp at the Chewore–Zambezi confluence. Trooper R. Blackburn opened fire before taking cover. A controversial and hasty withdrawal into the reeds in the river, later known as the 'Chewore Gallop', left behind a seconded territorial volunteer, Corporal Lionel Woods of 1RRR. Unwilling to allow the patrol's weapons, radios, packs and documents to fall into the enemy's hands, Woods stayed to fight. Alone for five hours in the dark, he beat off several attempts to take the camp, killing one and wounding two. Eventually SAS Corporal 'Ginger' Thompson joined the fight. For his gallantry, determination and coolness under conditions of extreme danger, Woods earned the Bronze Cross of Rhodesia. The trauma for the patrol was not over yet. That night, after they had moved some three kilometres southward, SAS Trooper Michael E. Mullin was mistakenly shot and killed during a changeover of sentries.

It was not just the Rhodesian security forces suffering reverses that day. The rumoured ZANU incursion threatened to become an unwelcome distraction but went awry. Eleven men, trained in Cuba, Tanzania and one in Israel, were driven from the ZANU house in Libala township, Lusaka, in three vehicles by Bernard Mtumha, Josiah Tongogara and Cletus Chigoni to their crossing point on the Zambezi at Lusitu Sub-Boma, south of Chirundu. Noel Mukono and his ZANU colleagues, John Matuare, Henry Chiota, Felix Rice and Peter Mtandwa, saw them off but the mission was immediately aborted when the canoe capsized, one man drowned and equipment was lost. Another man deserted shortly thereafter. The canoe drifted to the Rhodesian bank to be found by Rhodesian troops on 23 May 1968.

The next day, Wednesday, 27 March, the SAS discovered a possible camp in the vicinity of camp 3. Information from a captured MK cadre led to the discovery of an arms cache at camp 2 containing 41,620 7.62mm rounds, 4,800 9mm rounds, 21 M25 sub-machine guns and 62 RPG rockets.

Continuing to puzzle about the whereabouts of the remnants, JOC Cauldron concluded 32 men were bound for Sipolilo and 31 were scattered along the line of camps. A black Bouvier de Flandres dog led the follow-up from Reid-

Daly's contact on Innisfree farm. The dog was given the scent and returned with several (unfired) bullets in his mouth. He then guided the troops to an abandoned pack and a hand grenade. The tracking continued westward for ten kilometres until at 1410 hours two wounded men were overtaken on Tiripano estate. They were armed with an AK rifle, an RPD machine gun and were carrying 994 7.62mm rounds and five packs.

A patrol from Lieutenant Garth Barrett's 3 Troop 1 Commando found and lost tracks of six men at the Mukwichi–Angwa confluence. After they crossed the Angwa, Kenneth, their National Parks African tracker, uncovered the northward tracks of two or three but they were eight hours old and, as the light was fading, the follow-up was postponed until the morning.

JOC Cauldron was reinforced by five PATU sticks with four more held in reserve at Sinoia. Some normality was returning as the BSAP boat patrol from Mana Pools to the Mpata gorge resumed.

The extensive mopping-up in the Zambezi valley continued from the early hours of Thursday, 28 March. At 0305 hours a sentry, Trooper Frederickson of 8 Troop 2 Commando 1RLI, shot dead a cadre as he approached camp 4 at Chirambakadoma. Lieutenant Thompson then sent a patrol to clear the area for a night ambush at the water point.

Following tracks at 0900 hours just south and west of the Mukwichi–Angwa confluence, Sergeant Louis Botha, leading a four-man stick of 3 Troop 1 Commando, shot and killed two cadres who had been sleeping in the long grass and had reached for their weapons as they heard the approaching tracker.

Elsewhere that day, two cadres approached locals ten kilometres westward of Kanyemba, asking for a boat to cross the Zambezi. Their presence was betrayed to the SAS but they escaped, leaving behind a bandolier, two grenades, a uniform and two pairs of boots.

At the Chewore–Zambezi confluence, the SAS shot dead a cadre and 16 kilometres to the west another was captured by National Parks African scouts on the Zambezi's southern bank. To encourage further surrenders JOC Cauldron arranged for sky-shouting and a leaflet drop along the line of

ZAPU-MK camps. The Rhodesian troops had killed 28 and captured 15 but remained puzzled as to how many survivors remained. Moffat Hadebe was their prime target and he was thought to be in the Matsikiti area of the Mukwichi Tribal Trust Land accompanied by 17 men and with Sipolilo as his destination.

During the night of 28–29 March the SAS ambushed the track along the Zambezi's bank nine kilometres west of the Chewore and killed a cadre and recovered his PPSH sub-machine gun. At first light another SAS ambush killed Fred Maposa at camp 1.

In the Doma area at 0752 hours a cadre was captured on Impala Downs farm and an SKS rifle, an RPD machine gun and 109 7.62mm rounds recovered. Another was killed on Conway estate, nine kilometres to the northeast. PATU encountered two cadres, killing one on the eastern bank of the Chituhwe river, an eastern tributary of the Angwa, below the 770-metre-high Chitingachi mountain. The other cadre escaped. Police Reservist Honey was slightly wounded. As two empty packs were found, it was presumed these men were out foraging. JOC Cauldron concluded that the Hadebe group remained farther west in the broken country in the northeast of the Mukwichi Tribal Trust Land. Henry Nsele, an MK cadre, was arrested 19 kilometres west of camp 5 with head injuries which prevented his interrogation. He had been part of the MK group led by Michael Pohe. Nsele was flown to Harare hospital in Salisbury for treatment. The mystery regarding the whereabouts of Hadebe and his 17 followers remained.

Later that Friday a further arms cache was located six kilometres south-southwest of Chirambakadoma and yielded eight SKS rifles, 21 M34 Yugoslav rifles, one RPD machine gun, three PPSH sub-machine guns, 169 grenades, three boobytraps, 29,420 7.62mm rounds, 100 9mm rounds, six slabs of plastic explosive and 39 cylindrical tubes of TNT.

Otherwise RRAF 4 Squadron rotated the pilots of its four deployed Trojan aircraft who had flown some 28 hours on operations. The director of military intelligence continued to worry about loose talk on Operation Cauldron by an RRAF member and, more importantly, by a young female member of the staff of the prime minister's office. Dr Blackie, a well-loved Salisbury physician, had also been retelling tales told him by a patient who was a game

ranger.

On Saturday, 30 April an intensive follow-up was in progress from the scene of the PATU contact of the previous day in the Angwa valley. The cadre shot dead had been confirmed as a member of Hadebe's group and one of the three empty packs left at the scene had written on it the name of Felix Kahiya, a member of Hadebe's headquarters section who was known to be carrying money.

There was some good news for JOC Cauldron because, near St John's School in the Bakasa Tribal Trust Land, 50 kilometres to the east of the Angwa, locals arrested Phillip Mutero, the deputy commander of the ZAPU-MK B Platoon, and Comrade Chafaka of Section 2 of B Platoon. Both had fled ZAPU-MK camp 5 on 18 March before the airstrike along with ten others, including Patrick Sibanda, the chief logistics officer; Patrick Moyo, the A Platoon medical officer; Blackie Molife of Section 3 B Platoon and Tony Malume, Lucky Chawe and Samson Dhlodhlo Samson of Section 2 B Platoon. This group split up to seek food. Thereafter, three set off west for Gokwe where Malume had relatives. Mutero and Chafaka headed for Sipolilo. Mutero would be shot almost immediately while attempting to escape. Another leaflet drop was carried out over the operational area. JOC Cauldron was warned that further ZAPU-MK crossings were imminent, possibly at the Chewore river confluence. It therefore ordered the dropping of flares by aircraft over likely crossing points. The pilots were instructed to attack canoes or other craft on the Rhodesian side without authorization.

At 0830 hours on Sunday, 31 March, Lucky Chawe watched as 8 Troop 2 Commando was flown out of camp 4. He waited 20 minutes and walked into the camp only to be killed by Second Lieutenant S.J. Coetzee's 6 Troop 2 Commando. Chawe had not noticed that the helicopters had brought in troops as well as removing them. Elsewhere, eight kilometres south of the Mukwichi confluence and three kilometres east of the Angwa river, the tracks of six to ten cadres were followed until fresh ones of 15 men were found and followed without result. At 1800 hours contact was made in the Doma safari area with five cadres and Nathaniel Hleka, an MK courier from the Hadebe group, was killed. Ambushes and stops were set up in the Mangula area. PATU sticks were deployed in the Angwa, Hunyani and Sipolilo areas. The RLI Mortar

Troop reinforced Karoi as a reserve. Intelligence that a group of 50 would cross the Zambezi prompted aerial reconnaissance, using flares, over the crossing points.

At 0600 hours on Monday, 1 April five cadres surprised a stick of 1 Troop 1 Commando when ending a night ambush on a road on the western border of the Doma safari area, ten kilometres north of Innisfree farm. Because the troops were distracted with packing up for their departure by helicopter, their hasty response at the range of eight metres killed only one and allowed four to escape. The conclusion, however, was that Hadebe was nearby because the dead man was Michael Ncube, another MK courier from the Hadebe group. The four escapees were pursued with the able support of Flight Lieutenant Peter Petter-Bowyer tracking from his helicopter. Meanwhile a search of the area of the PATU contact with Kahiya, ten kilometres to the north, produced a weapon.

On Innisfree farm, a recently occupied camp was found with evidence of 17 inhabitants. Some ammunition, kit and maize cobs were found but no packs. The telltale figure-of-8 bootprint of one of two men was spotted 20 kilometres south of Mangula, which PATU followed but shortly lost it. It was assumed they were pursuing two deserters. Mortar Troop 1RLI joined the searches in the Mangula area. To the north there was an inconclusive contact at camp 3 with two cadres and a follow-up commenced. That night further aerial reconnaissance of the Zambezi was undertaken with flare drops at the crossing points in response to information from Zambia that a group of 50 was preparing to cross. To date 32 infiltrators had been killed and 17 captured.

During the morning of Tuesday, 2 April, alerted by local people near Sylvester’s kraal, two kilometres south of the Zambezi and eight kilometres west of Chief Chapoto’s kraal near Kanyemba, the SAS contacted three cadres, killing Elvis Nyakonde. The other two escaped. The SAS followed their tracks but soon lost them. It was thought the remnants of the group might be hidden just to the west near the 1,074-metre-high Kapsuku mountain, two kilometres from the southern bank of the Zambezi.

The finding of two sets of bootprints, one a figure-of-8, 17 kilometres east of Chirundu, led to suspicions of a reconnaissance for the threatened incursion,

particularly as the track swung back toward the Zambezi. Troops on border control were deployed in the search. Flight Lieutenant Ian Harvey, flying a helicopter carrying SAS Major Dudley Coventry and SAS Corporal R. Moore on a routine supply run, spotted an African waving. Harvey landed Moore who set off in pursuit of the man. As Harvey took off, his technician, Corporal Ness, fired at and wounded an African running through the bush. Moore shot him dead when he offered him resistance.

At 1430 hours Hadebe's base camp on the Rukute river in the southwest of the Doma safari area was discovered at last. It was the culmination of a two-and-a-half-day follow-up by ten men of Lieutenant Jeremy Strong's 12 Troop 3 Commando, aided by Peter Petter-Bowyer's ability to track from the air. After searching the camp, the stick commander led off on fresh tracks. Sixty metres on, ten of Hadebe's men opened fire at point-blank range. After hesitating, because his enemy was wearing blue denim trousers similar to BSAP riot dress, the commander returned fire, killing one and wounding another. During the sweep that followed the wounded man was shot dead. Another was killed by the air gunner, Brian Warren, of the second supporting helicopter flown by John Barnes. Three SKS rifles were picked up and a grenade and an RPG rocket were discovered in a nearby cave. Later, ten kilometres to the south, farm labourers on Conway farm captured another. Lieutenant Reid-Daly's Training Troop took over the follow-up. Hadebe and nine men had left the group on 31 March after the killing of Michael Ncube and had gone northeast in search of other survivors.

In response to the activity in the Doma area, the tactical headquarters was moved from Mangula 25 kilometres north to a PATU base on Chipungu farm. The BSAP paramilitary Support Unit was deployed to cover the game fence along the northeastern border of the Mukwichi Tribal Trust Land. 1 Commando 1RLI patrolled the Mukwichi river with a troop covering the Zambezi between the Chewore and Sapi rivers, 30 kilometres to the west. The ambush and searches of the line of ZAPU-MK camps continued. A photo-reconnaissance by a Canberra of the Chewore and Zambezi rivers and adjacent Zambian areas was ordered for the next day. JOC Cauldron also demanded that, to avoid confusion, all forces should wear the same uniform in the operational area. The day closed with the arrest of two armed cadres in the staff compound of the Makuti motel. Two fully loaded AK rifles were

recovered.

On Wednesday, 3 April, when ambushing camp 1, Lance-Corporal Chris Loots of Colour Sergeant Danny Hartman's SAS patrol captured a cadre armed with an SKS rifle and a grenade. At 2 Commando's headquarters at Dean's camp, Private Musiyiwa, a 10 Support Platoon driver, caught a B Platoon survivor rummaging through the camp's refuse pit.

At 1500 hours the tracks of the ZAPU-MK cadres in the Sinoia–Banket area were lost. That afternoon a patrol came across fresh spoor of 20 to 30 men between E and F hunting camps near the Rukomechi river confluence. The tracks headed southwest. Later they were reassessed farther down the track to be from four men. At least the mystery of the figure-of-8 spoor near Chirundu was solved when Mathias Nyoni, a survivor of Michael Pohe's MK group, was captured seven kilometres northeast of the main road on the eastern edge of the Chirundu sugar estates. He told how the group had split up after being addressed on 21 March by the prominent ZAPU cadre, Mbejelwa Moyo, who urged them to return to Zambia.

At 1855 hours, while ambushing the Mana Pools road two kilometres north of the Chemutsi dam at the foot of the escarpment and seven kilometres from the Chirundu–Makuti road, a stick of E Company 1RAR, exchanged automatic fire with three westward-moving cadres.

During the night of 3–4 April the SAS ambushing camp 3 captured two cadres. Eliot Ndhlovu, one of Hadebe's group captured on the previous day, claimed that he had been abandoned by Hadebe and Jackson Malame, Harry Hondo, Zacks Felix, Fanwell Choga and John Mandivengerayi. Later Hadebe, after his arrest, contradicted him, saying that Ndhlovu and Harry Hondo had left the group before the death of Michael Ncube with the intention of returning to Zambia. Hadebe's final companion, John Mandivengerayi, confirmed this.

Therefore, from early April, there were only four men in the Hadebe group. JOC Cauldron kept the BSAP Support Unit covering the game fence from Dean's camp westward. The ambushes, stops and sweeps were maintained in all areas but the RRAF state of readiness was relaxed. The JOC ordered the searching of the disused Coronet, Corona, Flying Camel and Crow diamond

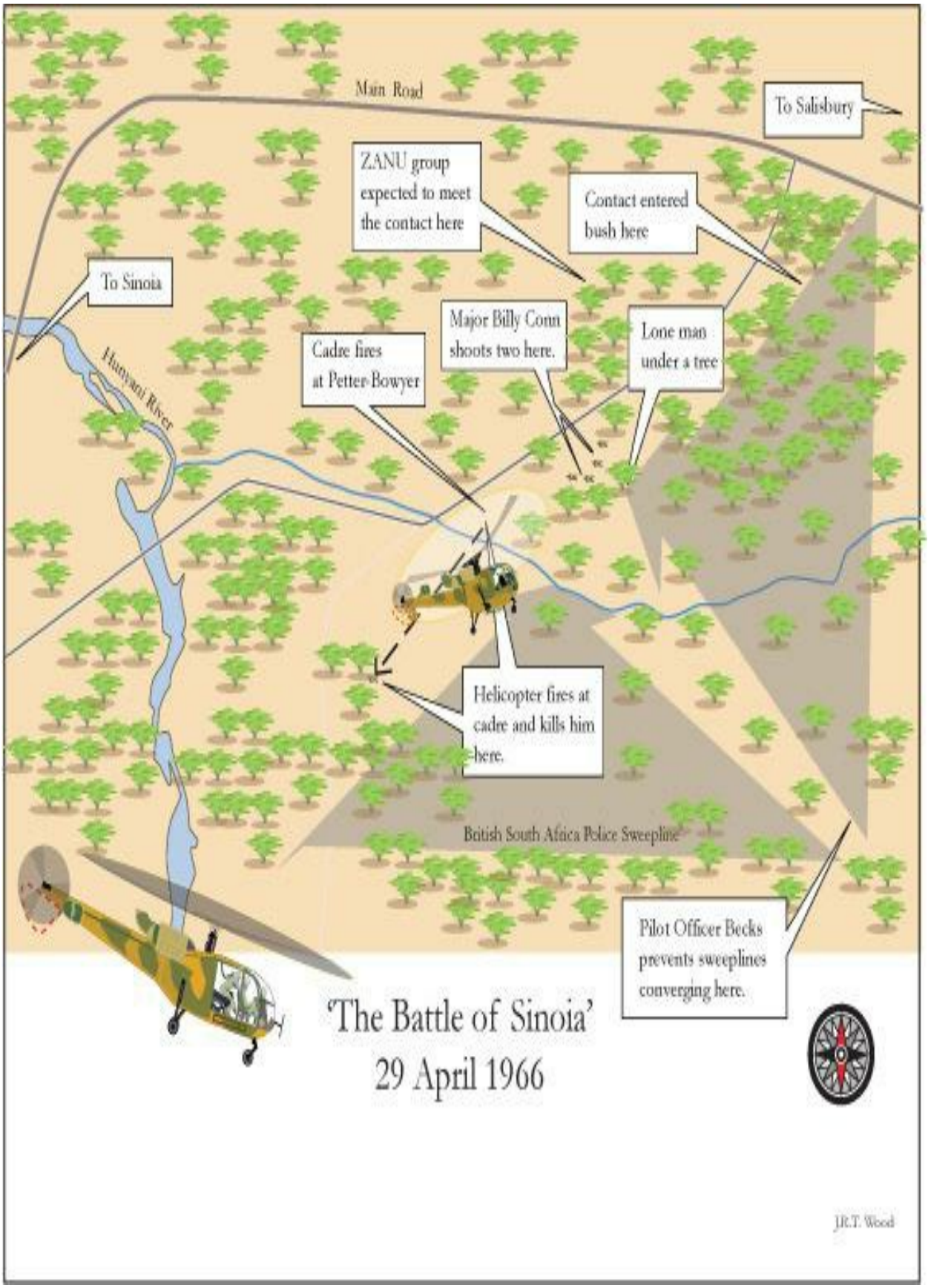
mines in the area. To date 36 ZAPU-MK men had been killed and 24 captured.

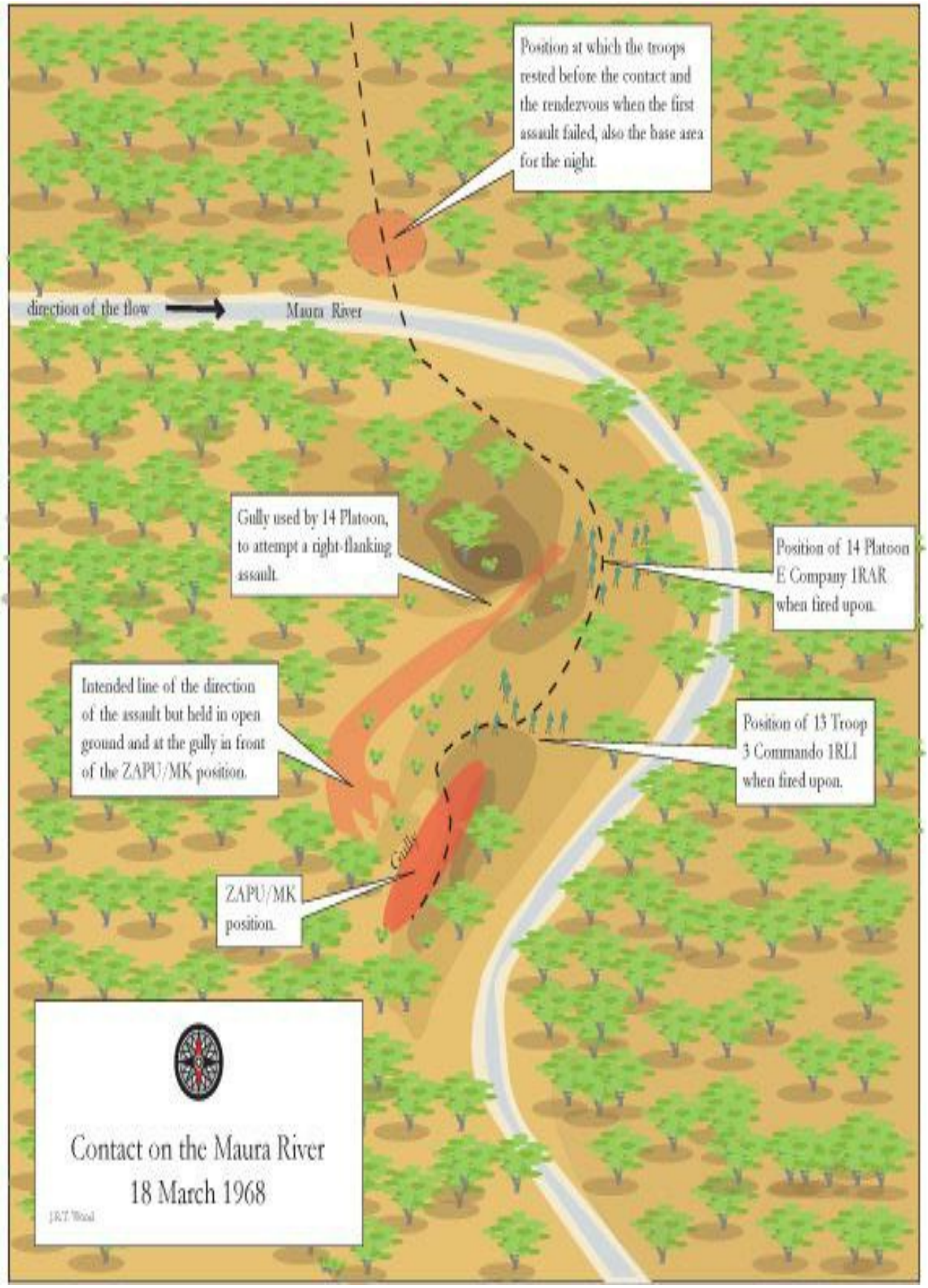
On Thursday morning, 4 April, E Company 1RAR cast around for tracks and soon discovered and followed a figure-of-8 bootprint. It was thought that the three being sought were stragglers from the group formed by Patrick Sibanda after the attack on camp 5. The two men arrested at Makuti motel had also belonged to the group. JOC Cauldron nevertheless sent 1 Commando 1RLI to reinforce the Makuti operational area supported by a helicopter. Superintendent Mallon, the border-control commander, based himself at Makuti to co-ordinate operations in the area. JOC Cauldron ordered patrols, ambushes and sweeps in the Mangula area, the Zambezi valley floor and along the Zambezi's southern bank. The nightly dropping of flares on the crossing points continued. As the Easter holidays were approaching, the JOC recommended the restriction of travel in the Zambezi valley from east of the Chirundu–Makuti road to the Mozambican border.

Early on Friday, 5 April locals captured a cadre on the Kadzi river in the Dande Tribal Trust Land. At 0740 hours the BSAP arrested another in the maize lands of the Doma area. Another was caught by African farm hands and a grenade found on Conway farm. At 1530 hours a stick of Sergeant Byrne's 1 Troop 1 Commando chased and killed a cadre after a motorist from Zambia had reported to Makuti that he had seen him by the side of the main road six kilometres to the south. The spoor of ten men on the road near the Rukomechi river confluence was washed out by rain. The score stood at 37 killed and 28 captured. Because three of the captured men, including George Mathusi, the chief of operations, said they had surrendered after reading air-dropped surrender leaflets, JOC decided to drop more in the Makuti–Nyakasanga area. Patrols, ambushes and sweeps were to continue. The problem of public access to the operational area continued to worry the JOC, particularly because it was thought that 76 terrorists remained at large, and the OCC did not think it necessary to freeze the operational area.

The involvement of the SAANC/MK in Operation Cauldron had brought a warning on 5 April from Pieter Willem Botha, the South African minister of defence. He stated that countries aiding and abetting terrorism could provoke South Africa into "hitting back hard". He was ignored and furthermore

Zambia and Tanzania, in particular, moved closer to South Africa's enemies by signing an agreement on 9 April with Communist China for the surveying of the rail route from Zambia to Dar es Salaam.


Main Road
To Salisbury
ZANU group expected to meet the contact here
Contact entered bush here
To Sinoia
Major Billy Conn shoots two here.
Lone man under a tree
Cadre fires at Petter-Bowyer
Hunyani River
Helicopter fires at cadre and kills him here.
British South Africa Police Sweepline
Pilot Officer Becks prevents sweeplines converging here.
'The Battle of Sinoia'
29 April 1966
J.R.T. Wood


Position at which the troops rested before the contact and the rendezvous when the first assault failed, also the base area for the night.
direction of the flow
Maura River
Gully used by 14 Platoon, to attempt a right-flanking assault.
Position of 14 Platoon E Company 1RAR when fired upon.
Intended line of the direction of the assault but held in open ground and at the gully in front of the ZAPU/MK position.
Position of 13 Troop 3 Commando 1RLI when fired upon.
Gully
ZAPU/MK position.
Contact on the Maura River
18 March 1968
J.R.T. Wood

MAG General Purpose Machine Gun

Weight	11.79kg / 25.98lb
Length	1,263mm / 49.7in
Barrel length	630 mm / 24.8in
Cartridge	7.62 × 51mm NATO
Action	Gas-operated, open bolt
Rate of fire	650–1,000rpm
Muzzle velocity	840 m/s / 2,756ft/s
Effective range	800m
Maximum range	1,500m
Feed system	Non-disintegrating DM1 or disintegrating M13 linked belt
Sights	Folding leaf sight with aperture and notch, front blade

J.R.T. Wood

České Zbrojovka M27

Weight	0.67kg / 24oz
Length	155mm / 6.1in
Barrel length	99mm / 3.9in
Height	125mm / 4.9in
Cartridge	7.65mm / .32in Browning
Action	Blowback
Feed system	8-round magazine
Sights	Fixed front blade, drift-adjustable notch rear

J.R.T. Wood

FN FAL (Fusil Automatique Léger) Rifle

Calibre	7.62mm
Cartridge	7.62 x 51mm NATO
Weight	4.3kg / 9.5lb
Length	1,090mm / 42.9in
Muzzle velocity	840m/sec / 2,756ft/sec
Rate of fire	650rpm
Effective range	600m
Feed System	30-round detachable box magazine

I.R.T. Wood

Cz M25 Sub-Machine Gun

Weight	3.27kg empty
Length	445mm folding stock model, folded
Barrel length	284mm
Cartridge	7.62 x 25mm Tokarev / 9 x 19mm Parabellum
Action	Blowback
Rate of fire	650rpm
Feed system	2, 4 or 40 round
Sights	Iron

J.R.T. Wood

Degtyaryov DP Light Machine Gun

Calibre	7.62 x 54mm
Weight	9.12kg / 20.1lb
Length	DP 1,270mm / 50in
Cartridge	7.62 x 54mm rimmed
Action	Gas-operated
Rate of fire	500–600rpm
Muzzle velocity	840m/s / 2,755ft/s
Effective range	800m
Feed system	47-round pan magazine

J.R.T. Wood

Česká Zbrojovka Vz 58/M1943

Calibre	7.62 x 39mm
Length	845mm / 33.3in
Weight	2.91kg / 6.42lb
Magazine	30-round box
Action	Gas-operated, falling breechblock
Rate of fire	800rpm
Muzzle velocity	705m/s / 2,313ft/s
Effective range	800m

I.R.T. Wood

Lee-Enfield No. 4 Rifle

Weight	4kg / 8.8lb
Length	1,100mm / 44in
Barrel length	635mm / 25in
Cartridge	.303 Mk VII SAA ball
Action	Bolt-action
Muzzle velocity	744 m/s / 2,441ft/s
Effective range	503m / 550yd
Maximum range	2,743m / 3,000yd
Feed system	10-round magazine, loaded with 5-round charger clips
Sights	Sliding ramp rear sights

I.R.T. Wood

Lanchester Sub-Machine Gun

Weight	9.57lb / 4.34kg
Length	33.5in / 851mm
Barrel length	8in / 203mm
Cartridge	9 × 19mm Parabellum
Action	Blowback, open bolt
Rate of fire	600rpm
Muzzle velocity	1,245ft/s / 380m/s
Effective range	150m
Feed system	32- or 50-round detachable box magazine
Sights	Front blade, rear adjustable

I.R.T. Wood

M95/30 Steyr Rifle

Calibre	8 x 56mm
Overall length	1,000mm
Barrel length	450mm
Weight	3.36kg empty
Magazine capacity	5 rounds in en-bloc clip

I.R.T. Wood

AK-47 (Avtomat Kalashnikova) Assault Rifle

Calibre	7.62mm
Cartridge	7.62 x 39mm
Weight	4.3kg / 9.5lb
Length	870mm / 34.3in
Muzzle velocity	715m/sec / 2,346ft/sec
Rate of fire	600rpm
Effective range	300m on automatic & 400m on semi-automatic
Feed system	30- or 40-round detachable box magazine

J.R.T. Wood

Makarov Semi-Automatic Pistol

Weight	30g / 26oz
Length	161.5mm / 6.34in
Barrel length	93.5mm / 3.83in
Width	29.4mm / 1.16in
Cartridge	9 x 18mm Makarov
Action	Blowback
Muzzle velocity	315m/s / 1,033ft/s
Effective range	50m / 54.7yd
Feed system	8-round detachable box magazine
Sights	Blade front, notch rear (drift adjustable)

J.R.T. Wood

RPG2 Rocket-Propelled Grenade Launcher

Weight	2.83kg / 6.24lb unarmed & 4.67kg /10.30lb armed
Length	1,200mm / 47.2in
Shell	PG-2 HEAT round
Calibre	40mm barrel & 82mm warhead
Rate of fire	3–4rpm
Effective range	100–150m
Maximum range	200m

I.R.T. Wood

Moisin Nagant Rifle

Weight	4.1kg / 9lb
Length	1,287mm / 50.7in
Barrel length	730mm / 29in
Cartridge	7.62 x 54mm rimmed
Action	Bolt-action
Muzzle velocity	865m/s / 2,838ft/s
Effective range	500m / 550 yards
Feed system	5-round non-detachable magazine, loaded individually or with 5-round stripper clips
Sights	Rear / ladder

T.R.T. Wood

PPSh-41 Pistolet-Pulemyot Shpagina Sub-Machine Gun

Weight	3.63kg / 8lb without magazine
Length	843mm / 33.2in
Barrel length	269mm / 10.6in
Cartridge	7.62 × 25mm Tokarev
Action	Blowback, open bolt
Rate of fire	900rpm
Muzzle velocity	488m/s / 1,600.8ft/s
Effective range	150m
Feed system	35-round box magazine or 71-round drum magazine
Sights	Iron sights

J.R.T. Wood

RPD Ruchnoy Pulemyot Degtyaryova Machine Gun

Weight	7.4kg / 16.31lb when empty
Length	1,037mm / 40.8in
Barrel length	520mm / 20.5in
Cartridge	7.62 x 39mm
Action	Gas-operated
Rate of fire	650–750rpm
Muzzle velocity	735m/s / 2,411ft/s
Effective range	100–1,000m
Feed system	Non-disintegrating 100-round segmented belt in a drum container
Sights	Open-type sights with rear sliding notch

J.R.T. Wood

MAT Sub-Machine Gun

Weight	3.5kg without magazine 4.17kg with 32-round magazine
Length	460mm / 720mm
Barrel length	230mm
Cartridge	9 x 19mm Parabellum
Action	Blowback
Rate of fire	600rpm
Magazine	20 or 32 rounds

J.R.T. Wood

Thompson Sub-Machine Gun

Weight	10.6lb / 4.8kg empty
Length	33.5in / 850mm
Cartridge	45 ACP 11.43 × 23mm
Action	Blowback, Blish Lock
Rate of fire	600–1500+rpm
Muzzle velocity	285m/s / 935ft/s
Effective range	50m / 160ft
Feed system	20–30-round stick/box magazine

J.R.T. Wood

SKS Semi-Automatic Rifle Samozaryadnyj Karabin Sistemy Simonova

Weight	3.85kg / 8lb 8oz
Length	1,021mm / 40.2in
Barrel length	521mm / 20.5in
Cartridge	7.62 × 39mm
Action	Short-stroke gas piston, tilting bolt, self-loading
Rate of fire	Semi-automatic
Muzzle velocity	715m/s
Effective range	500m / 550yd
Feed system	10-round internal box magazine 10-round stripper clip-fed or individual round loading
Sights	tangent notch rear sight graduated from 100–1,000m

J.R.T. Wood

Sandbagged defences at Kariba. Photo: R. Lockley

UZI Sub-Machine Gun

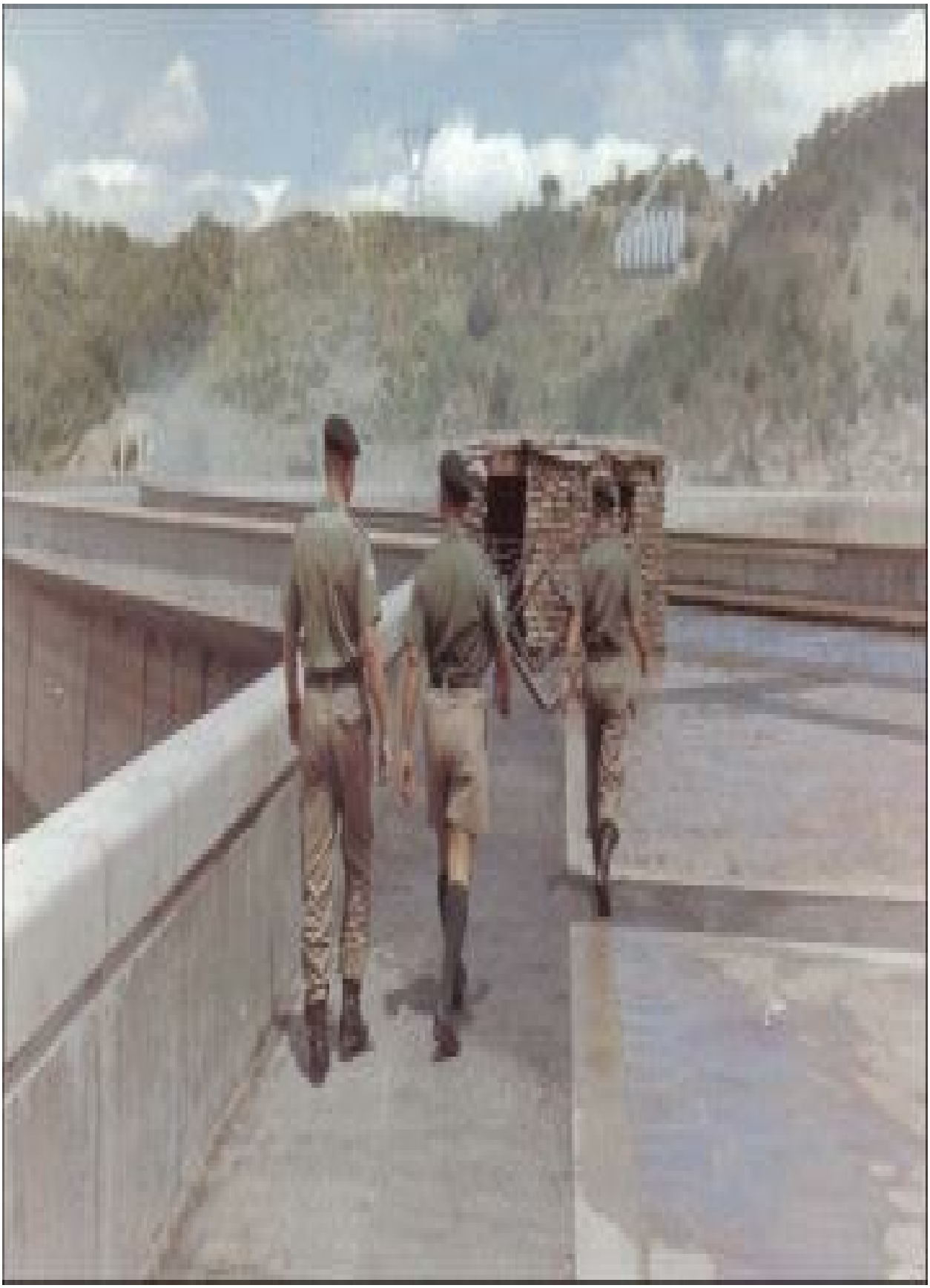
Weight	3.5kg / 7.72lb
Length	640mm / 25in stock extended, 470mm / 18.5in stock collapsed
Barrel length	260mm / 10.2in
Cartridge	9 x 19mm Parabellum
Action	Blowback, open bolt
Rate of fire	600rpm
Muzzle velocity	400m/s
Effective range	200m
Feed system	20, 25, 32, 40, 50 box magazines
Sights	Iron sights

J.R.T. Wood

Tokarev Pistol

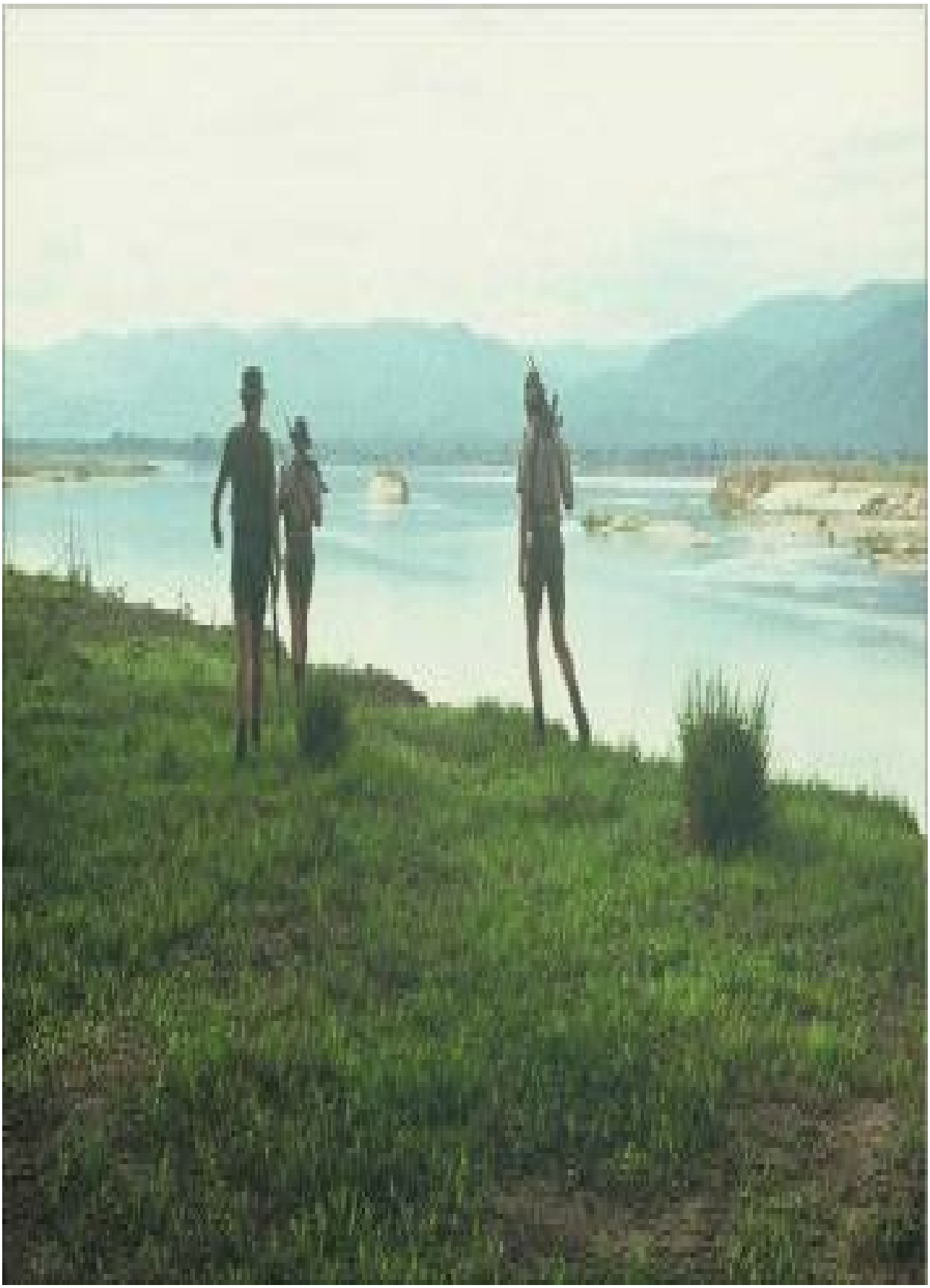
Weight	854g / 30.1oz
Length	194mm / 7.6in
Cartridge	7.62 × 25mm Tokarev
Action	Short recoil actuated, locked breech, single action
Muzzle velocity	420m/s / 1,378ft/s
Effective range	50m
Feed system	8-round detachable box magazine
Sights	Front blade, rear notch

J.R.T. Wood



1 Commando 1RLI NCOs inspecting the defences on the Kariba dam wall, shortly after UDI, November 1965. Photo: R. Lockley

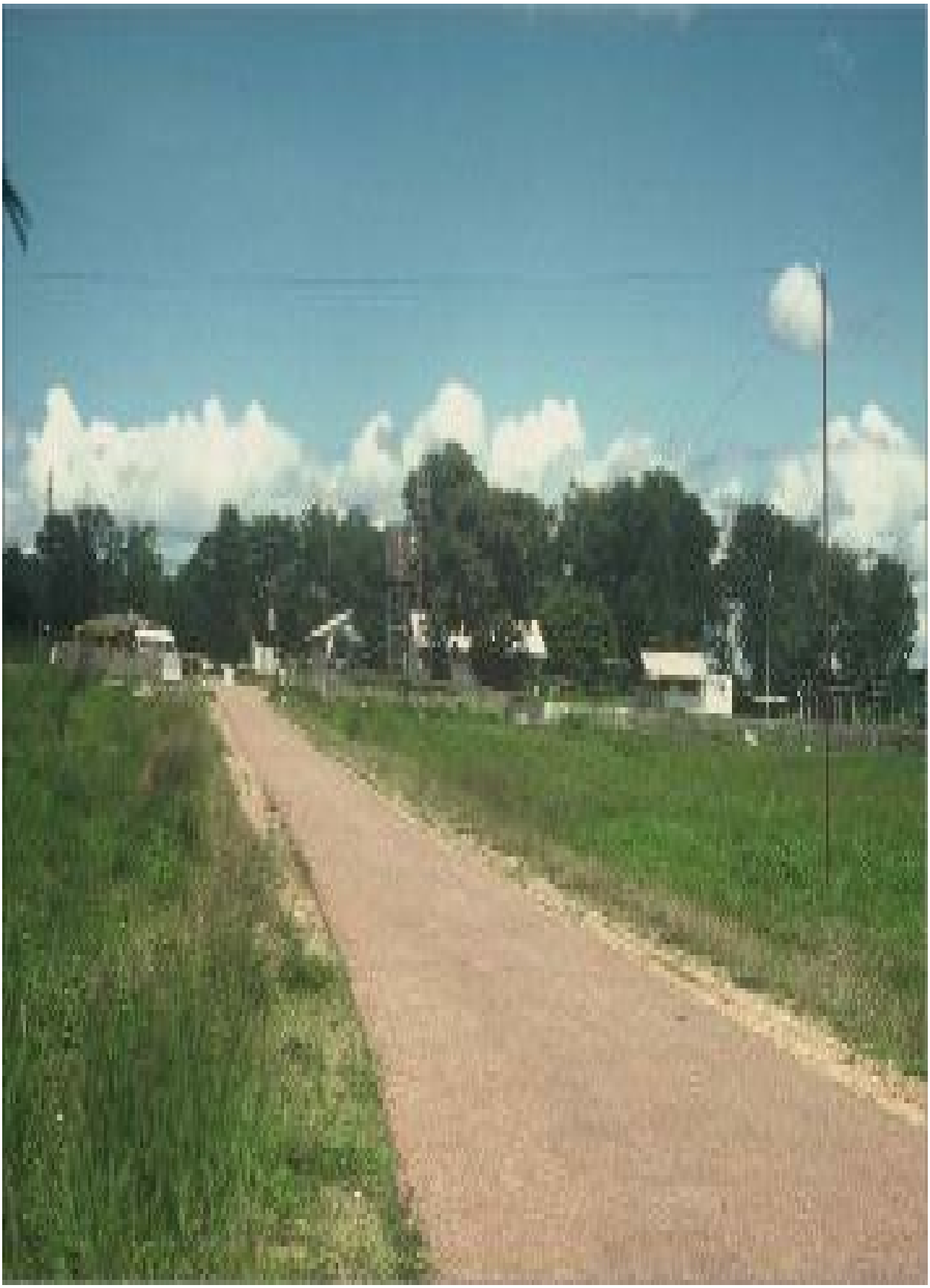
Ferret Scout cars of Support Group 1RLI, seen here at Cranborne barracks, Salisbury, 1967.



National Parks rangers cast for spoor at Mana Pools on the Zambezi. Photo Tom Argyle

NATIONAL PARK &
WILDLIFE LAND
YOU ARE NOW WITHIN
THE ABOVE AREA
IT IS DANGEROUS TO LEAVE
YOUR VEHICLE IN THE
VICINITY OF WILD ANIMALS
OR ATTEMPT TO CLIMB

On the road to Chirundu, starting the descent down the Zambezi escarpment.
Photo Tom Argyle



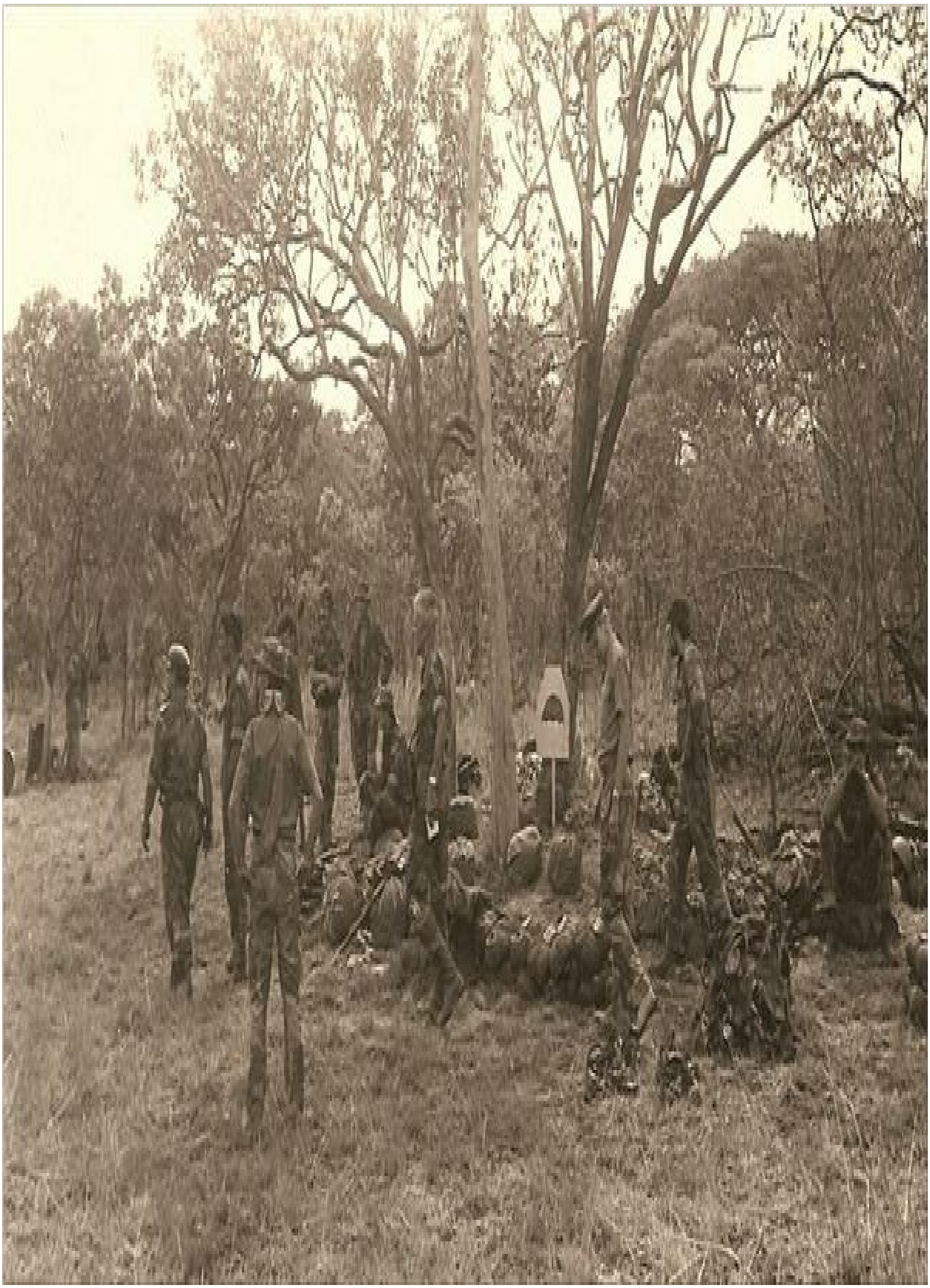
The approach to Kariba airport. Photo Tom Argyle

The Zambezi escarpment during the height of the dry season, August 1968.
Collection Rhodesian Services Association Rhodesia Regiment book project
© N. Surgeon

The Zambezi river at Deka, a formidable obstacle for insurgents attempting to cross from Zambia on the far bank. Photo Tom Argyle

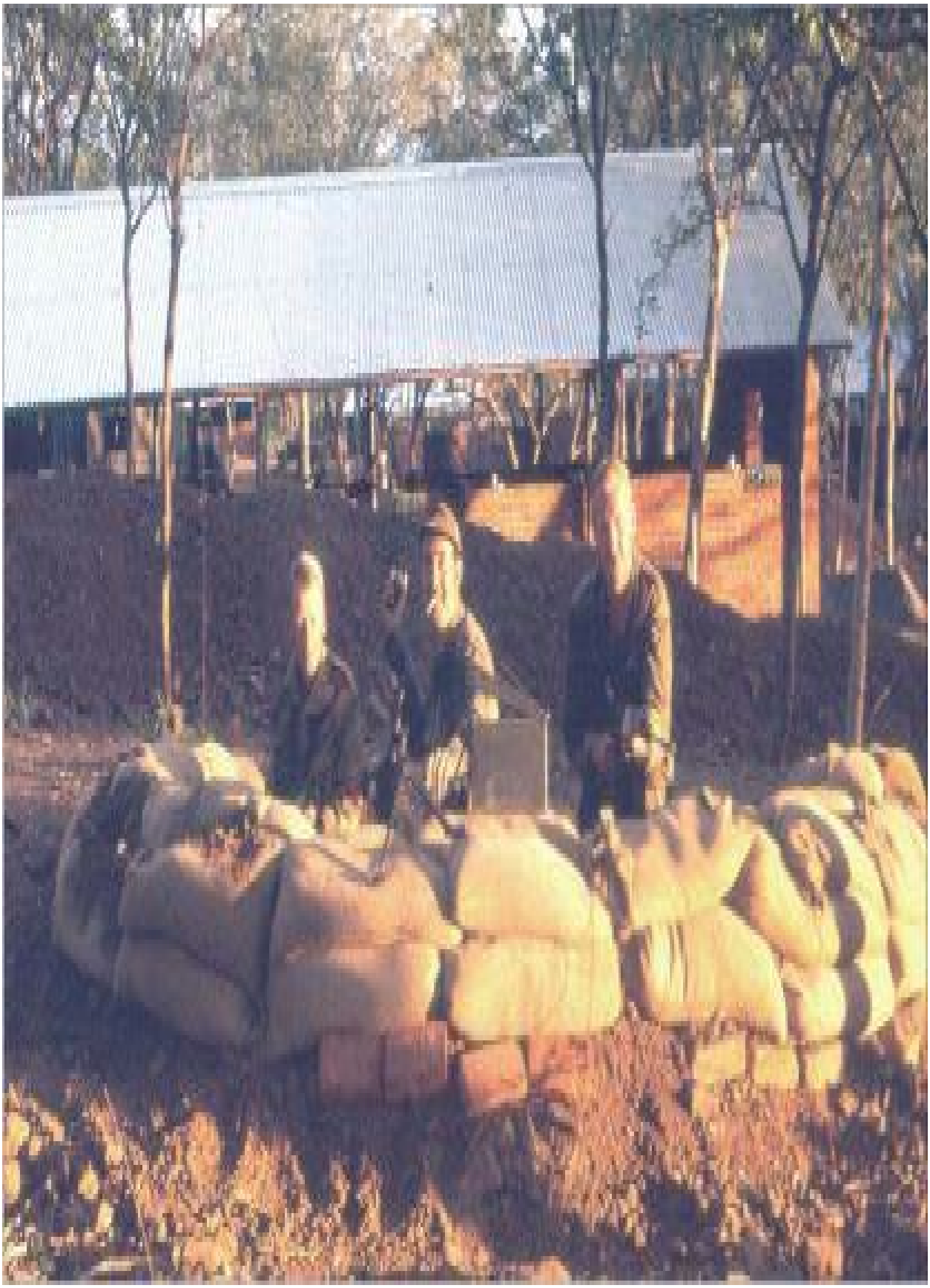
RRAF 311

A Provost goes through its paces.



An SAS forward admin base in Tete Province, Mozambique. Photo Ken Reed

A Royal Rhodesian Regiment stick samples the locals' fare during a patrol in the Chsiwiti TTL, Christmas Eve, 1969. Collection Rhodesian Services Association Rhodesia Regiment book project © N. Surgeon



9RRR troops pose in their bunker at the recently constructed Deka barracks on the Zambezi, 1970. Collection Rhodesian Services Association Rhodesia Regiment book project © I. Harper

A Royal Rhodesia Regiment lieutenant digs in, Mukumbura TTL, 1969.
Collection Rhodesian Services Association Rhodesia Regiment book project
© N. Surgeon

A tracker-combat course at Charara, Kariba, 1970. Collection Rhodesian Services Association Rhodesia Regiment book project © D. Scott-Donelan

40
JJC 69

9RRR resupply convoy on the road to Deka, 1970. Collection Rhodesian Services Association Rhodesia Regiment book project © I. Harper

Kariba dam, a vast expanse of water that forced insurgents from Zambia to infiltrate upstream toward the Victoria Falls, or downstream through the inhospitable Kariba gorge area. Photo Tom Argyle

Gutsa police camp in the Zambezi valley, c. 1970. Photo Blue and Old Gold

An Alouette ‘dusts off’ in the Zambezi valley.

An RLI trooper cleans his rifle in his bivouac.

A 2 Commando 1RLI patrol, sweaty and weary.

A young RLI trooper.

CHAPTER NINE:

OPERATION COSMIC, APRIL 1968

Perhaps because they thought the Rhodesian security forces were entirely distracted by Operation Cauldron, the ZANU hierarchy in Lusaka ordered yet another small group to cross the Zambezi.

On Saturday, 6 April they formed the eleven-man Monomatapa group, commanded by Nicholas Dube. It included nine survivors of the aborted mission on 26 March 1968. The political commissar was Comrade Nyajena and his deputy, Comrade Magunje; his adviser, Edward Kawara; a Chinese- and Israeli-trained medical orderly, Deni Mlambo (alias Danny Dixon Mlambo) and his assistant, 16-year-old Godwin Madahombe (alias Jongwa Guwa); and six cadres including David and Nicholas Sibanda. They were each given £50 in Rhodesian currency and issued with their weapons, ammunition and a formidable load of kit including propaganda material and a flag. Then they were driven in ZANU's three vehicles by Bernard Mtumha, Josiah Tongogara and Cletus Chigoni to the Zambezi river opposite Mapeta island and downstream of the Deka river confluence. The vehicles were camouflaged to hide them from RRAF reconnaissance flights and observation posts were set up to ensure the opposite bank was clear of Rhodesian security forces.

Noel Mukono, John Matuare, Henry Chiota, Felix Rice, Peter Mtandwa, Bernard Mtumha, Josiah Tongogara and Cletus Chigoni briefed Dube and his medical orderly, Mlambo, pointing out a hill in Rhodesia from which to follow a compass bearing of 105° toward Gokwe. The terrain was described, and they were told to avoid Rhodesian patrols for the first 50 to 70 kilometres. Their purpose was to subvert the Gokwe area to harvest local recruits to assist them in attacking the Sikombela restriction centre. Thereafter, they and the released ZANU restrictees would subvert the

Gatooma and Que Que districts, establish base camps and finally launch a guerrilla campaign. They were to leave behind ZANU pamphlets or handwritten messages on their battlefields. The briefing ended with the recounting of fictitious successes of the ZANU groups that had preceded them.

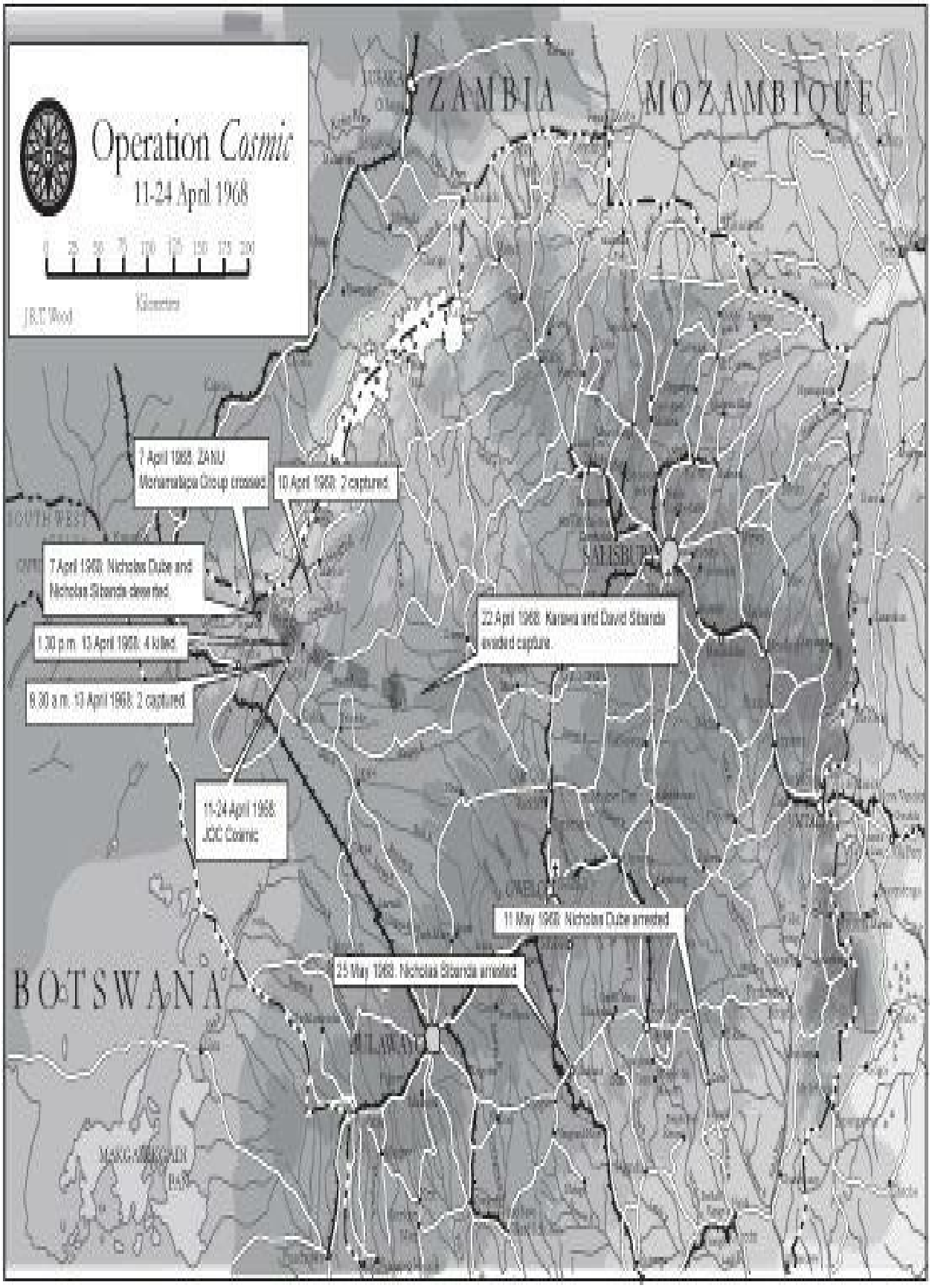
The crossing began at 1830 hours on Sunday, 7 April with two Shona-speaking boatmen ferrying the men and their equipment across in ZANU's blue dinghy. Taking four trips the crossing was complete by 1100 hours. The Monomatapa group set off immediately, walking for five hours until they reached a track 18 kilometres away. The sight of two lights moving along it forced such panicked dispersal that Dube, the leader, and Nicholas Sibanda got lost and promptly deserted. The group's adviser, Edward Kawara, and David Sibanda were also lost but found each other and teamed up.

That left the main party of seven to continue on their own toward Kamativi. At 0800 hours they halted and Mlambo, the medical orderly, and Madahombe left to search for water. When they returned their five comrades had gone. Leaving their rifles and equipment in the camp, Mlambo and Madahombe spent the next two days searching for them. They asked a local if he had seen their group. He had not but promptly reported their presence to Platoon Warrant Officer Manikayi, commander of 7 Platoon C Company 1RAR deployed on border control. The local led Manikayi, 7 Platoon and BSAP Inspector Parker into the Kavira forest. Mlambo's tracks were found on the road and followed for two kilometres until he and Madahombe were spotted and pursued. Exhausted, they surrendered at 1400 hours without a fight. They were armed with a Tokarev pistol and seven rounds. Their rifles were recovered later. The news of their capture prompted the formation of JOC Cosmic at Kamativi airstrip at 1030 hours on Thursday, 11 April 1968 with D Company 1RAR and five PATU sticks under command to allow C Company to return to border-control duties. Two Trojans, a helicopter and an SAP Cessna 185 were flown into Wankie. Intensive patrolling of the Kavira forest was ordered and roadblocks were set up in the area. By the afternoon the tracks of the group of five had been found. The five were fed at a kraal and slept there that night. The next day, 12 April, they walked ten kilometres to the northeast of Kamativi where they camped in thick bush in sight of the Kamativi airstrip five kilometres to the south.

On Saturday morning, 13 April Nyajena, the political commissar, and his deputy, Magunje, stashed their weapons and, dressed in civilian clothes, set off to buy food at Kamativi mine. Despite claiming to be locals on leave from Que Que, they were arrested in the mine compound at 0930 hours by two African policemen, Detective Sergeant Davy and Detective Constable Mquanjelwa. Nyajena agreed to lead Inspector Parker, Lieutenant Noel Morgan-Davies and his 10 Platoon D Company 1RAR back to their three companions. Nyajena attempted to delay the force in the hope his comrades would flee but Morgan-Davies put men on each flank and had an RRAF troop-carrying helicopter, flown by Flight Lieutenant Murray Hofmeyr, and an SAP one, circling the area.

As they entered the thick bush of the camp, Nyajena shouted a warning. In response one of the three leaped up and fired. Fire was returned and in the confusion Nyajena tried to escape but was shot dead. The troops and helicopters fired on the camp, killing two. The wounded survivor ran to a nearby dry riverbed and continued to return fire until killed by helicopter fire. One of the helicopters then took Magunje to identify the crossing place where abandoned weapons and equipment were found.

The missing Nicholas Sibanda had been fed, and had slept the night of Monday, 8 April at a kraal near the crossing point. On 9 April he walked to the Deka river bridge where he caught a bus to Wankie and the evening train to Bulawayo. He spent time with relatives there before reaching his father’s kraal near Shabani where Detective Section Officer Pym arrested him on 25 May. Nicholas Dube, the commander of the Monomatapa group, had abandoned his weapons and equipment, found the Deka–Msuna road and headed east along it. He found and hid in a deserted hut near Simangi before boarding a bus to Wankie on 10 April. In the evening he took a train to Bulawayo and then to Que Que where he stayed with relatives and his fiancée before reaching his kraal in the Bikita area on 5 May. Detective Sergeant Heri arrested Dube at his mother’s kraal near Zaka on 11 May. Kawara and David Sibanda had walked in a southeasterly direction and it was not until 22 April that their presence was detected in the Kana area some 170 kilometres east of Kamativi, but they eluded the RAR, PATU and CID-SB teams pursuing them.


Operation Cosmic
11-24 April 1968
0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200
Kilometres
J.R.T. Wood
ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE
7 April 1968: ZANU Mohlamatlaca Group crossed
10 April 1968: 2 captured
7 April 1968: Nicholas Dube and Nicholas Sibanda deserted.
1.30 p.m. 13 April 1968: 4 killed.
9.30 a.m. 13 April 1968: 2 captured.
11-24 April 1968: JSC Cosmic
22 April 1968: Karuwa and David Sibanda evaded capture.
11 May 1968: Nicholas Dube arrested
25 May 1968: Nicholas Sibanda arrested
BOTSWANA

Given that only four men were outstanding, Operation Cosmic was declared over on 24 April and the tidying up was left to the BSAP. Five M25 submachine guns were missing but the haul of weapons and equipment was impressive: an RPG-2 rocket launcher and three rockets with propellants, two AK assault rifles and two magazines, two SKS rifles, one RPD machine gun, three magazines and five belts, one Tokarev self-loading pistol and magazine, 3,126 7.62mm medium rounds, 64 7.62mm and 172 9mm pistol rounds, 17 M25 magazines, one TNT 400-gram and two 200-gram blocks, six grenades and primers, eight detonators, seven packs, haversacks and kitbags, one radio (including earphones), seven bandoliers, six water bottles, one felt-tip pen, five balaclavas, one pair of scissors, one tin of gun oil, one olive green cap, three jackets, one pair of trousers, one pair of socks, one dress, one brassière, one ZANU war flag, medical equipment, On Protracted War by Mao Zedong and four bundles of ZANU propaganda pamphlets. Before relieving C Company on border control, D Company 1RAR was sent to patrol the Sengwe area for a week assisted by two helicopters from the RRAF and the SAP and a Cessna 185. The elusive Kawara and David Sibanda reached Headlands, southeast of Salisbury, where they parted. Sibanda was arrested on the Mozambican border some months later, but Kawara was known to have reached Malawi.

CHAPTER TEN:

MOPPING UP ON OPERATION CAULDRON, APRIL 1968

The hunt for the Operation Cauldron fugitives had continued relentlessly. During the morning of Saturday, 6 April 1968, locals reported the presence of two of them 22 kilometres west of Kanyemba, west of the Tunsa river and close to the Zambezi river. Reacting, the SAS killed one, captured another and recovered an AK rifle and an M25 sub-machine gun. E Company 1RAR also captured one close to the main Chirundu road at the foot of the escarpment, 16 kilometres northwest of Makuti.

JOC Cauldron responded by reinforcing Makuti with a PATU stick from Marandellas and dispatching Support Group 1RLI to assist the SAS at Kanyemba. Mangula would be reinforced the next day by A Company 1RRR. Reports of strangers in the Sinoia area proved false. The tally stood at 38 killed and 30 captured. As the effort concentrated on locating the stragglers, the RRAF jet squadrons reverted to normal duties.

The next morning, Sunday, 7 April, Rhodesian security forces intercepted a Zambian radio report that three men were seen shouting for help from the Rhodesian bank opposite the Zambian village of Feira, at the Luangwa confluence. SAS corporals R. Moore and Carmichael and Trooper Hatfield responded, killed two and wounded and captured one. They recovered an SKS and two AK rifles. That night local Africans caught a cadre armed with an AK and a grenade on Dela Rosa farm on the western outskirts of Mangula village. Consequently JOC Cauldron reinforced Mangula with 3 Commando 1RLI and sent a PATU stick from Salisbury to Makuti. It ordered a search near ZAPU-MK camp 2 after the captured men had said that 25 packs and a radio had been abandoned there on 21 March. The tally stood at 40 killed and 31 captured.

One problem facing the JOC was a refusal by the National Parks African trackers to continue tracking unless they were paid danger pay. As their services were essential, the JOC demanded authority to pay the trackers £3/10/0 a week while on duty and 13 shillings per day as a retainer. If their skill resulted in a contact, they should earn a £10 bonus. The JOC wanted this payment made retrospective from the commencement of Operation Cauldron and that the trackers be issued with camouflaged clothing.

On Monday, 8 April local Africans reported finding day-old tracks of five to eight men and a Chinese-made water bottle south of the Mukwichi Tribal Trust Land. Concluding that the Hadebe group might be moving westward, JOC Cauldron reinforced the Karoi area with a PATU stick from Rusape and the BSAP Support Unit.

Tracks of four were also found north of the main road to Chirundu, just west of the Nyakasanga river. Patrols were dispatched to both scenes. SB Sinoia advised that the last positive contact with terrorists in the Sinoia-Banket area was five days previously but the JOC had patrols and ambushes continue in all areas. In addition, the RRAF was asked to locate exactly the ZAPU-MK camp in Zambia opposite the Chewore confluence.

On Tuesday, 9 April Lieutenant Nicholas Fawcett's 4 Troop 1 Commando and Section Officer Benjamin Marshall's PATU stick followed the tracks near the Nyakasanga river and found more near the Rukomechi river. In the Doma area, 500 metres north of the store on Tiripano estate, PATU killed a cadre armed with two grenades. To the west, spoor had led eastward from the previous day's discovery south of the Mukwichi to a resting place for five to eight men and then to two further camps where a 7.62mm round and chewed maize cobs were found. Directed by one of the captured men, troops found a cache east of the Chewore river near the ZAPU-MK camp 1. It contained a transceiver and a walkie-talkie radio plus manuals and codes, eight AK magazines, a 100-round RPD belt, 357 7.62mm rounds, clothing and quantities of tinned rice, meat, fish and sugar. Another of the captured men pointed out the camp in Zambia and its mooring point. Spoor had been found and lost near E hunting camp at the mouth of the Rukomechi river. JOC Cauldron deployed the BSAP Support Unit to the Makuti area and a helicopter to Red Base in Doma, two to Karoi and one to Kanyemba. Patrols

and ambushes in all areas continued. The score was 41 killed and 32 captured.

At 1415 hours on Wednesday, 10 April, ten kilometres northeast of Karoi, Operation Cauldron suffered its last fatal casualty after a three-day PATU-RLI follow-up on tracks, found by a farmer, of seven survivors of the airstrike on camp 5 on 18 March. The seven were cornered in a mining prospector's trench just north of the Mwami river on Rockwood estate. In the assault across open ground, Trooper Michael E. Thornley, an MAG gunner of Fawcett's 4 Troop 1 Commando 1RLI, was mortally wounded. Field Reservist James Barker then led an unsuccessful attempt to recover Thornley's MAG. The PATU commander, Section Officer Benjamin Marshall, had expended his rifle ammunition giving covering fire and was firing his pistol when he received a serious head wound and other injuries. Barker assisted the other members of the group in rescuing Thornley and Marshall. Marshall and Barker were later awarded the Police Decoration for Gallantry. In the lengthy contact all seven cadres were killed. Two AK and four SKS rifles, an RPD machine gun, two RPG-2 rocket launchers, two RPG-2 rockets, ten grenades and a quantity of ammunition were secured. The seven dead were, however, not part of the Hadebe group whose whereabouts continued to remain a mystery.

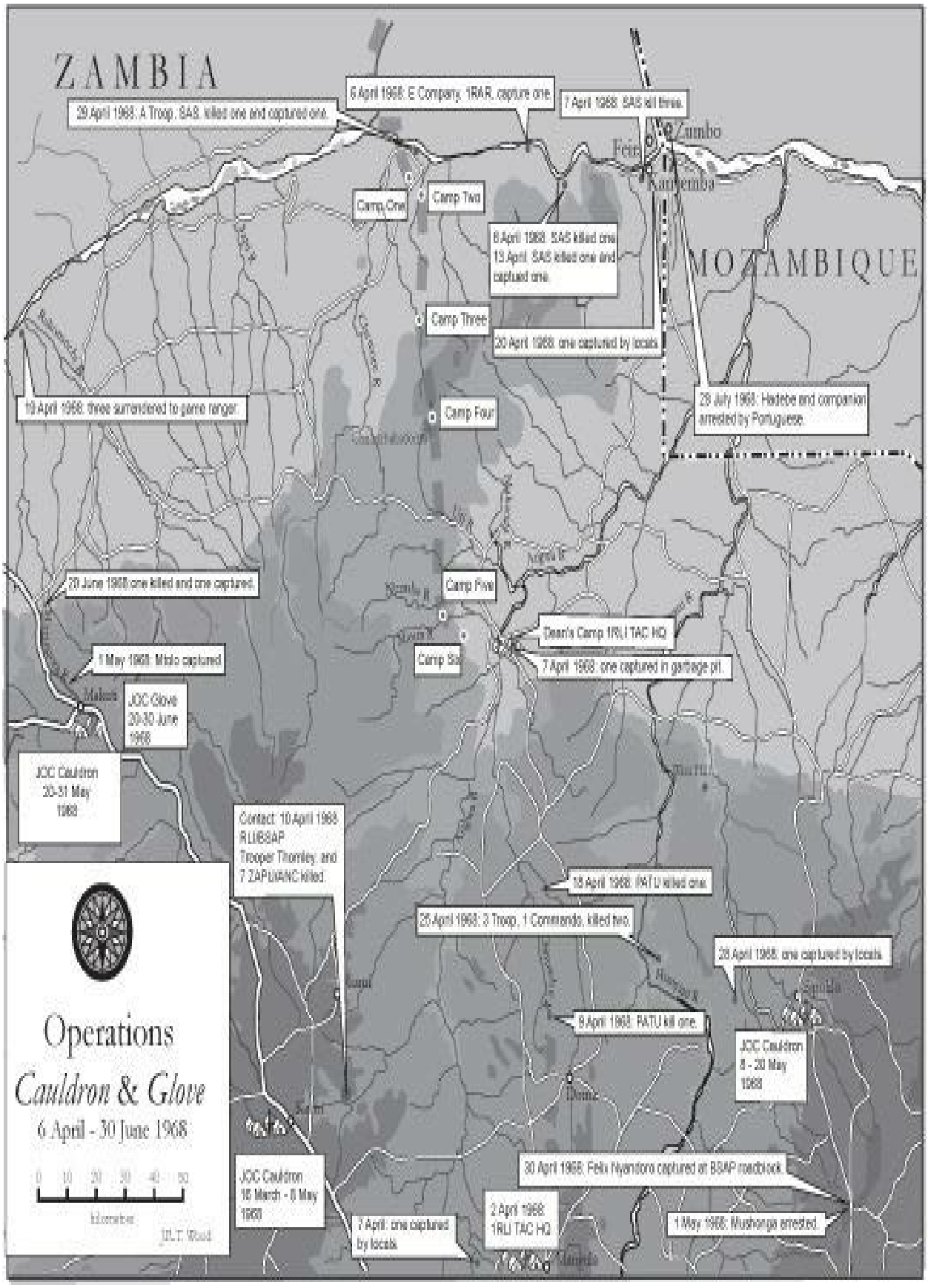
Elsewhere, the tracks of three men were being followed from the previous day but were lost near the Rukomechi river mouth. JOC Cauldron stood down some local territorials as it estimated that only two groups of five and some stragglers were at large. Even so, patrols and ambushes were maintained. The tally was 48 killed and 32 captured. A single set of tracks was followed six kilometres east of camp 2 near the Mwanja river, only to be lost the next day. The day's haul was one AK rifle, two AK magazines, ten 7.62mm rounds and four grenades on Innisfree farm and one grenade, two detonators and a small quantity of 7.62mm ammunition ten kilometres to the north in the Doma safari area.

Rhodesian security forces on Friday, 12 April had to investigate a report from a motorist who thought he had been fired on just west of the Great Dyke on the main Salisbury–Sinoia road. Nothing was found.

There was a success on Saturday, 13 April when, after reading the airdropped

leaflets, a survivor of the airstrike on 18 March gave himself up to a game ranger at H hunting camp on the Zambezi river, seven kilometres west of the Chewore confluence. On the Tunsa river SAS Sergeant Joe Conway found two sets of tracks. He and his two fellow trackers were ambushed shortly thereafter and returned fire, wounding both men, one mortally.

On Sunday, 14 April there was a false alarm on Tavoy farm, 15 kilometres west of Karoi. The spoor of three men was followed northward and then lost. JOC Cauldron thought that terrorists could be on the white farms to the north and perhaps the west of Karoi but that Hadebe's group was still in the Mangula area. To intercept any fugitives, the JOC deployed B Company SAP to cover the Zambezi at Nyamuomba farm, north of Kariba, and sent one of its platoons to Mana Pools. 3 Commando 1RLI was ordered to patrol the Kanyemba to Chewore area and Mortar Troop 1RLI, the Rukomechi confluence. Support Group 1RLI was at Makuti, A Company 1RRR at Red Base, Doma, and 2 Commando 1RLI at Dean's camp on the Angwa. The tally stood at 48 killed and 33 captured.


ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE
29 April 1968: A Troop, SAS, killed one and captured one.
6 April 1968: E Company, 1RAR, capture one.
7 April 1968: SAS kill three.
Zumbo
Feira
Kanyemba
Camp One
Camp Two
8 April 1968: SAS killed one
13 April: SAS killed one and captured one.
Camp Three
20 April 1968: one captured by locals.
28 July 1968: Hadebe and companion arrested by Portuguese.
19 April 1968: three surrendered to game ranger.
Camp Four
28 June 1968 one killed and one captured.
Camp Five
Tear's Camp 1RLI TAC HQ
7 April 1968: one captured in garbage pit.
Camp Six
1 May 1968: Mtolo captured
Makuti
JOC Glove
20-30 June
1968
JOC Cauldron
20-31 May
1968
Contact: 10 April 1968
RLI/BSAP
Trooper Thornley, and
7 ZAPU/ANC killed.
18 April 1968: PATU killed one.
25 April 1968: 3 Troop, 1 Commando, killed two.
28 April 1968: one captured by locals.
8 April 1968: PATU kill one.
JOC Cauldron
8 - 20 May
1968
Operations
Cauldron & Glove
6 April - 30 June 1968
0 10 20 30 40 50
kilometers
30 April 1968: Felix Nyandoro captured at BSAP roadblock.
JOC Cauldron
16 March - 0 May
1968
7 April: one captured by locals.
2 April 1968
1RLI TAC HQ
1 May 1968: Mushonga arrested.

What was not known was that Hadebe and his remaining three companions had been searching the Zambezi escarpment and valley for surviving groups. They had eventually reached the Zambezi west of the Chewore, seeking someone to ferry them across to Zambia. They walked westward along the Zambezi and then struck southwestward, arriving near the main Makuti–Chirundu road at the foot of the escarpment. There they had argued on what to do. Zacks Choga and Jackson Malame wanted to cross the Zambezi at Chirundu and departed to do so. Hadebe intended to get a lift to Salisbury but the sound of an aircraft and the knowledge that there would be roadblocks deterred him. Consequently he and John Mandivengerayi decided to strike eastward and attempt to return to Zambia via Mozambique near the Luangwa confluence.

The problem for JOC Cauldron remained the stragglers and Hadebe in particular. On Wednesday, 17 April the spoor from Tavoy farm was lost. A report on the previous day of the sighting of a suspected terrorist approaching the game fence near Chananga was investigated but the spoor was lost. A suspicion that four terrorists had visited a farm clinic southwest of Karoi proved false when it was discovered they were local tribesmen suffering from malaria. A report of two men walking through white-owned farms in the Vuti area northwest of Karoi was being investigated. Hadebe and his men were thought to be heading for Wira hill, in the mountainous northern end of the Kachuta Tribal Trust Land, nine kilometres east of the Hunyani river. Interrogation of the captured man, Henry Nsele, undergoing treatment at Harare hospital, yielded information of an abandoned radio and packs near ZAPU-MK camp 2 and weapons near camp 1. JOC Cauldron proposed to fly him to camps 1 and 2 on 18 April to confirm this allegation.

A search of Wira hill the next day, 18 April, failed to produce any sign of Hadebe. Camp 2 was revisited but produced only a jerrycan of petrol. The killing of Reef Moyo on Rivonia farm, a survivor of the Reid-Daly contact, armed with an SKS rifle and three grenades, confirmed that terrorists had remained in the Mangula area. Concern that they were in the Vuti African Purchase Area increased with a report that four were being fed on farm 62. The score stood at 82, with 49 killed and 33 captured. Troops were deployed

to the Zambezi in response to reports of 60–200 ZAPU cadres assembling at Zambia's Musika game camp, 12 kilometres west of the Chewore confluence.

There was further success at noon on Friday, 19 April when three MK cadres surrendered to the senior African game ranger at E hunting camp, just west of the Rukomechi river mouth. They were survivors of the SAS contact on 21 March with Michael Pohe's group. They explained they had abandoned their weapons and that they had last seen their fourth companion, Gerald Mtolo (alias Reggie Hlatshwayo) 14 days previously. A search began for their weapons and Mtolo.

Elsewhere, the spoor found at Maumbe store in the Urungwe Tribal Trust Land proved impossible to follow due to heavy rain. Reports of sightings of men on the Zambian bank opposite the Chewore confluence continued. Aerial reconnaissance, however, found nothing. The tally rose to 85 with 49 killed and 36 captured. Further interrogation revealed that Hadebe's intention was to move southeast from Wira hill, south to the Umvukwes range. JOC Cauldron therefore reinforced Sipolilo and set up a tactical headquarters at the police station.

The three-monthly renewal of the state of emergency was due that day, 19 April 1968, and Operation Cauldron offered enough excuse for it. Desmond Lardner-Burke argued that the renewal was necessary because, although internal subversion had diminished, "the small hard core of African racialists in our midst" had not given up their intentions and the nation could not relax. Indeed, he cautioned that "it would be wishful thinking to suggest that we have already won the battle against terrorism. The so-called liberation movement of the Organization of African Unity is likely to co-ordinate, on an increasing scale, its attack on Rhodesia, South Africa and the Portuguese territories". He warned that large numbers of African nationalist insurgents were being trained in Tanzania and Zambia with financial and material support from communist sources and the World Council of Churches. Britain's contribution to this was not just the sanctions designed to hamper the Rhodesian counter-insurgency efforts through denying fuel and vehicles but by supplying terrorists with British passports to allow them to travel abroad to acquire training in Eastern bloc countries. The net result was that

the Cauldron infiltrators were better armed and trained and more sophisticated than their predecessors.[8]

The mopping-up on Operation Cauldron continued. On Saturday, 20 April Harold Ndhlovu of ZAPU was detained by local Africans near Chief Chapoto's kraal, five kilometres southwest of Kanyemba, and George Tau, an MK cadre, was arrested by the BSAP at Charara on the northern shore of Lake Kariba. The search for weapons of the three MK men who surrendered at E hunting camp was fruitless and the report of a terrorist presence in the Vuti area proved false. Although nothing had been found at Wira hill near Sipolilo, the BSAP discovered that, for the past two weeks, the people living there had been assisting Svimbo Mushonga (alias Togopanyika Tswimbo) who had been wounded in the foot during Sachse's contact on 18 March. It was also understood that a second man, one of a small group, had bought food in the past week, including a 100lb bag of maize. In response, a fresh operation was mounted at first light on Sunday, 21 April and confirmed the presence of Mushonga and a group of three cadres, and possibly more, led by a man they thought was from Plumtree. The group had attempted to recruit and subvert the people and to obtain information about local politicians and nationalist sympathizers. After the BSAP patrol departed, a local man, Dedeya Chimutsi, left his kraal that night, 21 April, taking with him 200 pounds of maize meal which he clearly could not carry alone. His spoor was followed the next day but was lost after two kilometres. A number of locals was taken to Sipolilo for interrogation and an ambush was established within Chimutsi's kraal. The interrogation confirmed that the people had been feeding the group, receiving £4/15/0 for 15 pounds of maize meal, 16 pounds of sugar and eight tins of corned beef. They also indicated that the group's base camp was at the confluence of the Ngwangwangwa and Hunyani rivers. The rumour was that the gang was 40 strong but this was thought unlikely. JOC Cauldron responded by reinforcing Sipolilo with 1 Commando 1RLI plus two troops of 3 Commando, and closed the Red Base at Doma. The overall score stood at 49 killed and 38 captured.

B Company 1RAR patrol the northern border area of Matabeleland. Photo Masodja

JOC Cauldron on 24 April had the distraction of having to investigate a somewhat dubious report of a white male in the Vuti area dressed in Cubanstyle battledress and carrying a Thompson sub-machine gun. At Wira hill in the Kachuta Tribal Trust the searches were still fruitless. The interrogation of the locals at least revealed the names of two more of the hunted group. They were Felix Kahiya, the former member of Hadebe's group, and Misheck Hliziyo. Furthermore, a local man led the security forces to the alleged base camp on the Ngwangwangwa river where 200 pounds of maize meal were deposited on 21 April for the terrorists. A note was found there written by the missing man, Dedeya Chimutsi, who had carried the maize meal there, asking someone to meet him. Tracks of two men and a bag of freshly picked mielie (maize) cobs were also found. The position was ambushed, resulting in the arrest at 1810 hours of Chimutsi. A follow-up was planned to exploit whatever he revealed.

At 1210 hours on 25 April, 15 kilometres south of Wira hill, Lieutenant Garth Barrett's 3 Troop 1 Commando 1RLI exchanged fire with what was thought to be a group of four, killing two ZAPU cadres, Adam Kureva and Lingisani Mpofu, and recovering two AK rifles, one loaded M25 magazine, eleven grenades, 2,150 7.62mm rounds, four packs, four groundsheets, three Cuban smocks and a quantity of plastic explosive. During the night the wounded ZAPU fugitive, Svimbo Mushonga, was reported to be at Mudindo kraal in the Kachuta Tribal Trust Land. He left when he saw troops nearby and was guided to join the Kahiya group at last.

Tracks were followed north from 3 Troop's contact at dawn on 26 April but were soon lost. All that was found was 150 7.62mm rounds but at least the interrogation confirmed that the group being pursued was led by Felix Kahiya, and had just been joined by Svimbo Mushonga and had been fed by the people in the Sipolilo area since 6 April. Only four members of the group had been seen and it was said that they intended to go to Doma to meet others

who had “tools” and then return to the Sipolilo area. Aware that their tracks could give them away, the group was attempting to obliterate spoor and to purchase new footwear. Finally, the interrogators learned the group were confident that they could avoid detection and keep the whereabouts of their campsite a secret. What worried them was securing their supply of food. Consequently the JOC ordered further searches at Wira hill and Mawunxi hill to the southeast. Additional BSAP patrols were mounted in the Kachuta Tribal Trust area. The score was 89, with 51 killed and 38 captured; it was estimated that 44 terrorists, including 33 ZAPU and eleven MK, were still at large.

The next day, Saturday, 27 April, a search near H hunting camp on the Zambezi river uncovered a kitbag, three AK magazines, 68 7.62mm rounds, one tin of corned beef and one tin of rice. The cache was thought to be three weeks old. Ambushes and searches continued in all areas.

That day, the Rhodesian government thought it was time to contradict the ZAPU and ZANU claims in Lusaka that the Rhodesian army had been “badly thrashed in heavy fighting” and that 80 Rhodesian servicemen had been killed. It stated that, despite the Tanzanian and Zambian assistance being furnished to their enemies, the Rhodesian forces had in fact lost five killed in contrast to the 55 ZAPU-MK and ZANU deaths in the two current operations (Cauldron and Cosmic), along with an unspecified large number captured and the considerable quantities of arms and equipment. Ian Smith added a warning to Rhodesians that the terrorist incursion might continue for some time because Zambia was aiding the infiltrators and had spurned Rhodesian offers to ease her problems caused by the impassability of the road from Dar es Salaam by providing rail facilities through Rhodesia to Zambia and the reopening of the oil refinery at Umtali.

On Sunday, 28 April JOC Cauldron had leaflets dropped in the Sipolilo and Mangula areas encouraging the terrorists to surrender on the promise of humane treatment, offering a reward for information but warning the African population that assistance of terrorists would incur severe punishment. That day, near ZAPU-MK camp 2, southeast of the Chewore confluence, Sergeant J.P. van Vuuren’s A Troop SAS found fresh tracks of two to three men, followed them and captured the ailing ZAPU cadre, Zacks Mulalazi, who led

them to where they could expect Titus Gabe to return from hunting. On 29 April Gabe was killed on the southern bank of the Zambezi, nine kilometres east of the Chewore. Mulalazi then died after being fed on army biscuits. A signal from SAS Captain Brian Robinson congratulating the quartermaster-general on his biscuits' first kill was ill received. Both their rifles, an AK and an SKS, were recovered.

Farther upstream the search at H hunting camp uncovered a Klepper-type canoe and two AK rifles and two magazines. In the Sipolilo area, a report by locals led to the arrest of an MK cadre on farm 100 in the Nyakapupu African Purchase Area bordering the Hunyani river, 20 kilometres west of Sipolilo. He revealed that Barrett's 3 Troop 1 Commando had fought six, not four, men on 25 April. As he expected Kahiya and Hadebe to rendezvous in the Umvukwes range to the southeast, JOC Cauldron ordered all likely routes to be ambushed.

The order was timely because Kahiya, armed with a grenade and three 7.62mm rounds, was arrested on Tuesday, 30 April at a roadblock in the Mpinga pass in the Umvukwes hills. He confirmed that he was seeking Hadebe because Svimbo Mushonga had been told that there was a group of terrorists living south of the Umvukwes range in a gumtree plantation. Kahiya also explained that Hadebe had wanted all the groups to rendezvous northeast of Sipolilo between the Mpinge and Hunyani rivers where a local, John Chikoya Dzukumanji, would supply food. Worryingly enough, a report came from there that an armed group of four with packs had just sought food from an African tractor driver on Red Lichen farm, ten kilometres northeast of Sipolilo. Tracks were found and troops were deployed.

Also alarming was a report from an African medical orderly at the Mhembere clinic, 24 miles west of Mrewa (over 100 kilometres southeast of Sipolilo), of the arrival of an unshaven, long-haired African man. He was wearing khaki trousers, black boots and a light sky-blue shirt, with washed-out bloodstains on the front and back. His khaki webbing belt had hooked onto it a khaki lanyard which disappeared into his right-hand pocket which bulged ominously, suggesting a hidden pistol. Greeted in Shona, he replied in Sindebele and thereafter conversed in Chilapalapa, the lingua franca. He asked for a dressing for a swollen and sceptic wound under his left

collarbone. The orderly treated him and then tried to make an excuse so that he could telephone the BSAP but his patient became suspicious and ran off into the bush. The orderly estimated that the wound was about two weeks old but otherwise the man was in good physical condition. As Peter Petter-Bowyer relates, the money given to each cadre had been, in this case, a lifesaver. Shrapnel had hit the man during the airstrike at ZAPU-MK camp 5 on 18 March. Despite the loss of blood and the pain, he had evaded capture and pursuing hyenas to climb the formidable Zambezi escarpment to the Doma area. There he used his money to buy food and more importantly a bottle of Dettol antiseptic into which he dipped a stick which he thrust through his wound while gagging on the fumes. He made his way back to Zambia and was captured five years later on another incursion.[9]

JOC Cauldron had already enjoyed success elsewhere because, in the early hours of that day, Tuesday, 30 April, Sly Masuku, the ZAPU killer of Eric Ridge, was shot and wounded during a raid on farm 138 in the Chenjiri African Purchase Area, 60 kilometres south of Karoi. Masuku was carrying two grenades and later indicated where he had hidden his AK rifle, two magazines and 35 rounds. He had arrived at the farm two days previously, seeking food and assistance. The wife of the farmer provided it but later informed an African employee of the department of conservation and extension who alerted the BSAP. The final success of the day was the recovery, three kilometres from E camp on the Zambezi, of an AK rifle and ten rounds hidden by the three MK men captured there on 20 April. The score stood at 94, with 53 killed and 41 captured.

Success continued in the afternoon of Wednesday, 1 May when the long-sought MK cadre, Gerald Mtolo (alias Reggie Hlatshwayo), was finally run to ground, exhausted and unarmed on the upper reaches of the Marangora river, five kilometres northwest of Makuti. In addition, in the Sipolilo area two captured cadres showed where they had hidden two AK rifles, three AK magazines, 77 7.62mm rounds and a grenade.

Because it was reported that Hadebe was in the Sipolilo area, JOC Cauldron ordered a leaflet drop there and in the Mangula district, and mounted patrols and ambushes in all areas. What was of concern was an SAP report of small boats filled with armed men crossing the Zambezi north of Kariba between A

and B hunting camps.

On Thursday, 2 May all sweeps and searches proved negative, although Gerald Mtolo did show where he had hidden his camouflage overall, AK rifle and 15 rounds, just 30 metres from where he was arrested. Furthermore, that night Svimbo Mushonga was arrested at 1930 hours at the Jester mine in the Umvukwes range after being betrayed by mine employees. He was armed with two AK rifles, a compass and 45 7.62mm rounds. The SB confirmed that it was Hadebe who approached the tractor driver on Red Lichen farm. The SAP report of a crossing on the Zambezi proved negative. The score was 96, with 53 killed and 43 captured and 20 were thought to be outstanding with at least four, including Hadebe, in the Sipolilo area.

The winding down of Operation Cauldron coincided with the completion of reviews commissioned by the counter-insurgency committee on 27 March 1967. Lieutenant-Colonel G.A.D. Rawlins, then the military liaison officer at the Rhodesian diplomatic mission in Pretoria and an advocate of psychological warfare, acknowledged wryly that some of the accepted dictums of counter-insurgency warfare seemed impossible to achieve. He agreed that the keys to success were swift and relentless action to deny the insurgents time to gain strength and superiority; good intelligence, communications and logistics; the best possible equipment; imaginative command and staff work; and thorough and realistic training. It meant that the terrorist bases had to be attacked and the security forces had to maintain the offensive and not become embedded in a series of fortresses like the French in Indo-China and the Portuguese in Angola. Surprise was vital and depended on mobile forces, good intelligence, tracking teams, adequate firepower and good logistics. He agreed that military success was necessary to make it possible to effect the crucial political and economic reforms which would retain or win over the mass of the population. Rawlins argued that the terrorist sanctuaries in Zambia and Tanzania had to be eliminated to end the incursions from them. If this were not possible, he wanted pressure applied on Zambia to expel ZANU and ZAPU. This could be applied by closing rail access to Rhodesia at Victoria Falls, cutting off the supply of electricity from Kariba, withdrawing technical aid to Zambia, and a campaign of active sabotage and clandestine raids on terrorist bases. Everything depended, however, on a contented, supportive population. His final warning was

against complacency.

RAR troops unload a wounded prisoner from a casevac helicopter. Photo Masodja

B Company 1RAR on a vehicle patrol in Zambezi valley, 1968. Photo Masodja

Brigadier Keith Coster, the chief of staff, warned that Operation Cauldron alone had overstretched the Rhodesian army and the RRAF. It had meant that, to find and defeat 100 insurgents, 2 Brigade, tasked to defend Mashonaland and Manicaland, had committed all its regular troops and had to call up police reservists and territorial troops. Because border control had to be maintained, the Rhodesian army was left with a reserve of three RAR infantry companies, or 340 men, and one or two of these companies had to be deployed on Operation Cosmic to deal with the ZANU incursion into Matabeleland. As the RRAF had needed personnel to activate forward airfields and provide forward air support operations centres, it had been forced to second personnel from command and staff appointments and from the squadrons, thereby reducing operational efficiency. Given that the 100 or more insurgents had remained undetected for three months, it also meant that more effective ground coverage was needed in border areas.

Consequently Coster pressed for the expansion of the regular army to allow more than one operation to be mounted simultaneously. He recalled he had asked for this in October 1967, but the reply from the Treasury was that it had insufficient funds. Coster insisted that the money had to be found because his force would have to face the 1,000 insurgents being trained by ZANU, ZAPU and the SAANC. These three forces were also developing links with Mozambique's experienced and militant Frente de Libertaçao de Moçambique (Frelimo) at a time when it was spreading its influence into the Tete province and threatening Rhodesia's vulnerable northeastern border. The incursions into Rhodesia had been by small or relatively small groups but, Coster repeated, Cauldron had left the reserve strength of the Rhodesian forces at a dangerously low level when they also had to assist the BSAP and the SAP in the impossible task of preventing groups from slipping through Rhodesia's long borders. Coster warned therefore that, because guerrilla warfare was based on surprise and hit and run, countering it required constant patrolling on the ground and in the air along with good communications,

rapid mobility and the ability to concentrate sufficient forces and aircraft. To date, he wrote, Rhodesia had been fortunate to contain subversion with relatively fewer troops than any other country but her enemies were improving their tactics, training and logistics. It meant Rhodesia needed to increase her effective infantry strength and improve command and control.

Consequently Coster asked for an extension of national service or an enlarged regular army. Because the SAS was the most effective counter-insurgency unit, he preferred to add four troops to it because it never lacked recruits. He acknowledged he could call up the territorials of the RRR battalions but only for short periods. He proposed to bring the RLI up to strength. Among a number of suggestions, he wanted an additional fully manned and equipped brigade headquarters in anticipation of incursions in the vulnerable northeast region bordering on Mozambique. He sought also to expand the RRAF which, after the dissolution of the Federation, had suffered a shortage of funds resulting in a reduction from 892 regular personnel and 79 aircraft (plus ten in storage) to 800 men and 68 aircraft. Since then the aircraft strength had risen to 94 but the personnel only to 823, a remarkably low ratio by world standards. An increase in manpower, Coster argued, was particularly necessary for command and control in the field. The RRAF required a nucleus of staff trained to man a tactical air headquarters and two forward air support operations centres. To match the army and BSAP ranks manning the JOCs and tactical headquarters, at least two wing commanders and two squadron leaders were required along with sufficient aircrew to fly the light aircraft and helicopters of 4 and 7 squadrons in particular. The demands for the light aircraft were such that two pilots per aircraft were needed. The increase in the helicopter strength from eight to 12 aircraft also required extra pilots and technicians. More RRAF signallers and radio technicians were also needed. Coster found that overall the RRAF required at least eight officers and 17 other ranks immediately despite the difficulties of recruitment and time taken for training. This, he estimated, would cost £32,545.

JOC Cauldron experienced a day without incident on Sunday, 5 May and suggested to army headquarters that perhaps the ZAPU-MK casualties should be publicized again. It continued to think that it was Hadebe who had spoken to the tractor driver on Red Lichen farm, Sipolilo. It presumed that some of

the unaccounted-for infiltrators had been killed in action and buried by their own kind and that others had managed to cross back into Zambia. It believed that one unarmed survivor of the Kahiya group was in the Mtoroshanga area.

Because there were no developments on 6 and 7 May despite aerial reconnaissance, patrols and roadblocks, the daily intelligence appreciations were no longer issued for either operations Cauldron or Cosmic from 8 May. The forces at Makuti, Chirundu and Kanyemba were ordered to revert to normal border control and JOC Cauldron to move to Sipolilo.

Still searching for Hadebe and other survivors, JOC Cauldron had the area between the Hunyani and Dande rivers in the Zambezi escarpment searched without result. It deployed the SAS to the Umvukwes range on 13 May and had E Company 1RAR cover the Zambezi from Kanyemba to the Sapi river. An African farmer reported finding terrorist tracks that day on farm 76, four kilometres west of Vuti. Spoor of two men was confirmed and was followed for five kilometres southeastward and then lost on a road. It was picked up again on 15 May and followed in a southerly direction with a PRAW aircraft assisting. It was lost again on 16 May after 20 kilometres in the Urungwe Tribal Trust Land. There was a report of two armed Africans on Dunromin farm, 20 kilometres south of Karoi. At 2240 hours shots were heard at Karoi airfield but a search was fruitless. The good news was that the BSAP had arrested the last member of the Kahiya group in Bulawayo. The next day, PATU searched for the Dunromin pair. The SB investigated a report of terrorists near the Marshall Hartley mission in the Musengezi African Purchase Area west of Salisbury. JOC Cauldron decided to move to Makuti on 20 May, leaving Sipolilo in the hands of PATU and army sub-units.

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8 Rhodesia, Debates, Vol. 70, cols. 775–778, 19 April 1967; Keesing's, 29 June–6 July 1968, Vol. XVI, p. 22784; Flower, pp. 54–55.

9 Petter-Bowyer, Peter, Winds of Destruction: The Autobiography of a

Rhodesian Combat Pilot, 30° South Publishers, Johannesburg, 2005; Trafford, Victoria, 2003, p. 180.

CHAPTER ELEVEN:

OPERATION FLOTILLA, MAY–JUNE 1968

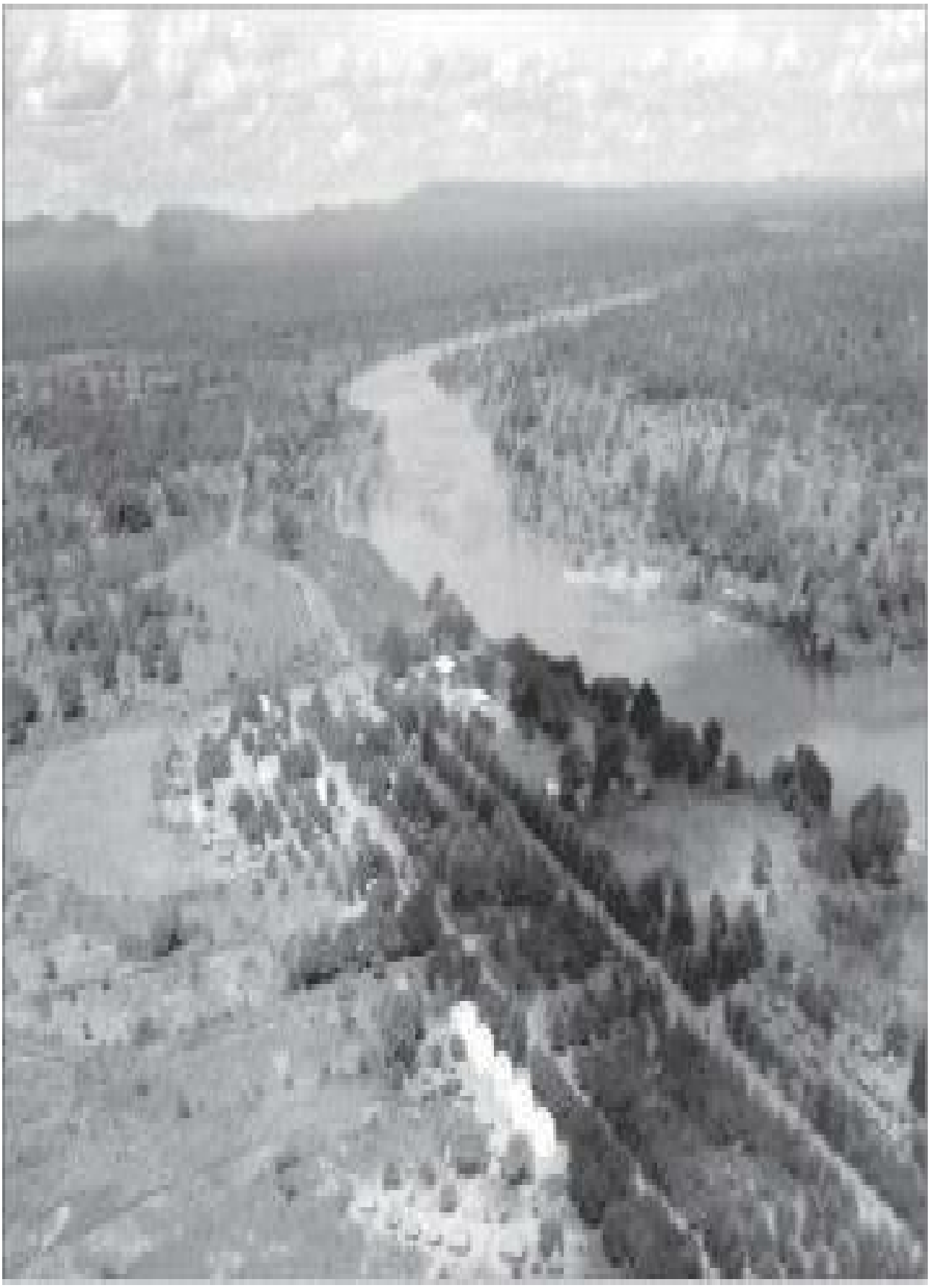
The distraction for the Rhodesian security forces on Thursday, 23 May 1968 was the discovery by an RLI patrol of bootprints and a dropped map on the northern bank of the Mazoe river in the Mkota Tribal Trust Land in the extreme northeast of Rhodesia. The tracks were of 12 armed members of the South African Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and five guides from the Comite Revolucionario de Moçambique (Coremo).

The RLI had been alerted by the Portuguese authorities to the possibility of a group heading toward Rhodesia, after a sighting of 17 armed men in the Chioco area of the Tete province to the north of the Rhodesian border. The group had left Lusaka on 16 April and crossed from southeastern Zambia into Mozambique's Tete province with the intention of walking southward to Swaziland, skirting Rhodesia and then onward to Zululand in South Africa. Inadvertently they crossed into the northeast corner of Rhodesia at Baobab beacon. The discovery of their tracks launched Operation Fliotilla with its JOC at the border village of Nyamapanda on the main road to Malawi. Flotilla was assigned 1 Commando 1RLI, PATU sticks and two helicopters.

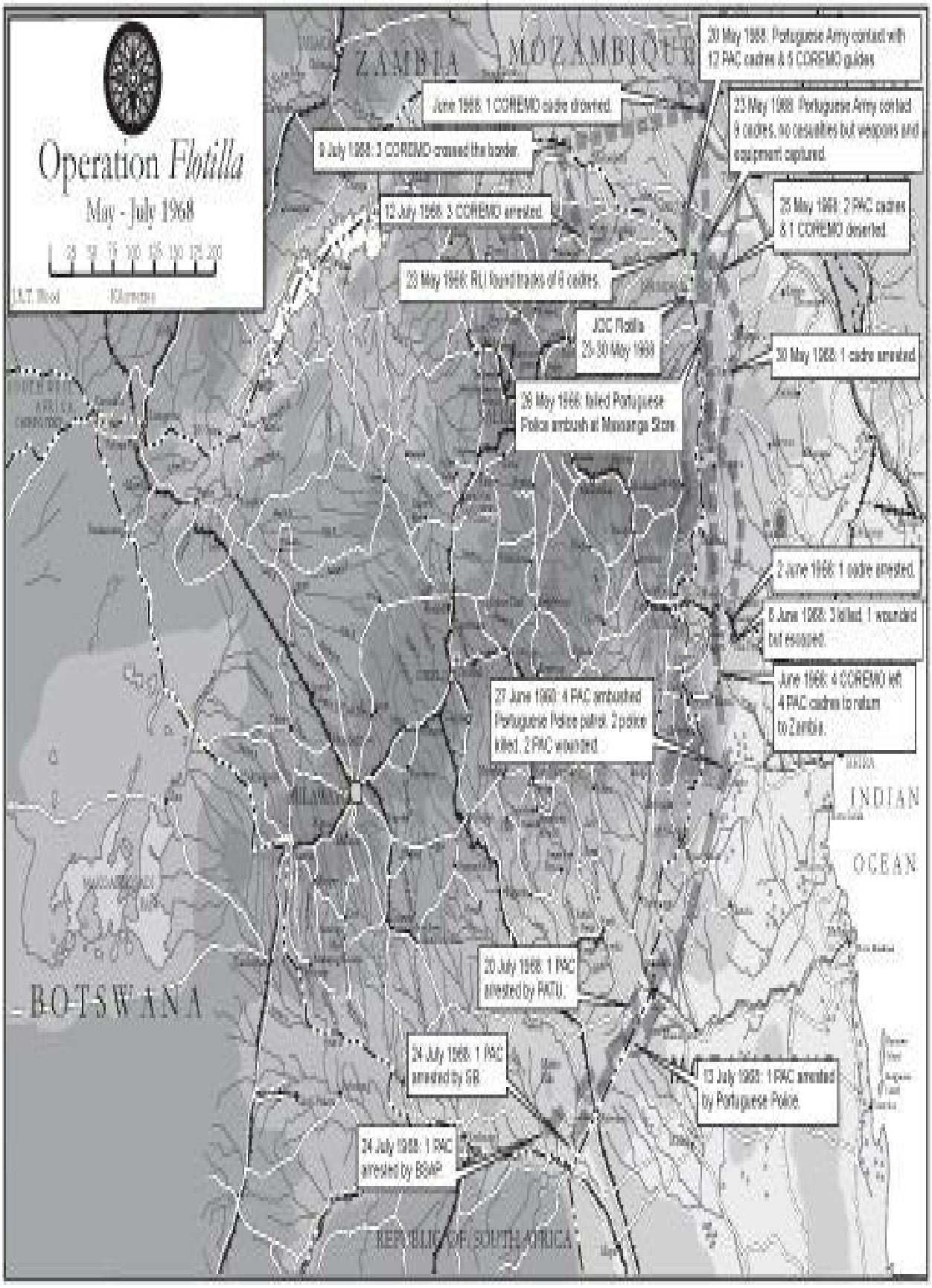
The PAC group promptly withdrew into Mozambique with the RLI and Portuguese forces in pursuit. The result was the arrests of two members on 30 May and 2 June and the killing on Thursday, 6 June of three PAC members and the capturing of one near Vila Pery in Mozambique's Manica province. Three of the Coremo guides were caught in the Mount Darwin area on Friday, 12 July after one, Julius Dzonzi, was drowned trying to swim the Zambezi.

Four PAC cadres had pressed on southward and on Thursday, 27 June fought their way out of a Portuguese ambush near Dombo, killing three Portuguese

at the cost of two wounded and the loss of one weapon. The group split up. The Portuguese caught one near the Rhodesian border on Saturday, 13 July. Another, Egyptian-trained John Twala of Bloemfontein, approached an unarmed BSAP African constable on Friday, 19 July near Chipinda Pools in southeastern Rhodesia asking for water. At 1900 hours on 20 July Twala walked into a PATU ambush at the Shabani fly gate near Chipinda Pools and was arrested by BSAP Inspector Richard Isemonger. Twala was armed with an AK rifle, two charged magazines and 227 rounds and three grenades. On 24 July the BSAP CID arrested another Egyptian-trained cadre, Prima Manzeleli of East London, southwest of Vila Salazar. He had lost his rifle but was armed with four grenades and was still carrying 185 rifle rounds and a charged AK magazine. The outstanding cadre, Oscar Ntoni of Langa, Cape Town, was also caught by the BSAP that day at Muponesi store on the Bubye river. He was armed with an AK rifle, 131 rounds and three grenades. Four PAC cadres were believed by the Portuguese authorities to have returned to Zambia.



The town of Chioco in Mozambique's Tete Province, on the Ruia River. The RRAF operated from here in 1969–70.


Operation Flotilla
May - July 1968
ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE
BOTSWANA
INDIAN
OCEAN
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
June 1968: 1 COREMO cadre drowned.
8 July 1968: 3 COREMO crossed the border.
12 July 1968: 3 COREMO arrested.
23 May 1968: RU found bodies of 6 cadres.
JOC Rotila
25-30 May 1968
26 May 1968: failed Portuguese Police ambush at Massanga Store.
20 May 1968: Portuguese Army contact with 12 PAC cadres & 5 COREMO guides
23 May 1968: Portuguese Army contact 9 cadres, no casualties but weapons and equipment captured.
25 May 1968: 2 PAC cadres & 1 COREMO deserted.
30 May 1968: 1 cadre arrested.
2 June 1968: 1 cadre arrested.
6 June 1968: 3 killed, 1 wounded but escaped.
June 1968: 4 COREMO left 4 PAC cadres to return to Zambia.
27 June 1968: 4 PAC ambushed Portuguese Police patrol. 2 police killed, 2 PAC wounded
20 July 1968: 1 PAC arrested by PATU.
24 July 1968: 1 PAC arrested by SB
24 July 1968: 1 PAC arrested by BSAP
13 July 1968: 1 PAC arrested by Portuguese Police.

Zambia promptly withdrew her support from the Communist Chinese-aligned PAC and Coremo when the Soviet Union had objected to Chinese efforts to woo the African liberation movements to make them dependent on their arms and finance. Radio Moscow broadcast a statement by Alfred Nzo, the SAANC secretary-general (and later South Africa's foreign minister) that "Maoist agents" using the PAC were sabotaging the struggle in South Africa. The PAC was not the first movement to lose Zambian support; Angola's Uniåo Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola (Unita) had been expelled after it had sabotaged Zambia's railway line connecting it with the Benguela railway. ZANU (also Chinese-aligned) survived for the moment in Zambia but ZAPU, the ANC and the Zambians would enjoy an enduring alliance. Soviet sponsorship of the selected African nationalist movements would be made formal at Khartoum in January 1969.

CHAPTER TWELVE:

OPERATION FLOTILLA, MAY–JUNE 1968

Sporadic sightings of fugitives had kept Operation Cauldron in being. The report of two armed Africans on Dunromin farm, Karoi, proved negative on Saturday, 18 May but the next day PATU had to investigate a report of six shots being fired on Zebra Downs farm, 14 kilometres east of Karoi. The Zambezi–Chewore bank was being patrolled by E Company 1RAR who was also ambushing the ZAPU-MK camp 4. The RLI would reinforce Sipolilo. The SAP remained at Chirundu. The SAS was withdrawn to Salisbury while 2 Commando 1RLI moved to Makuti to man the JOC.

Operation Cauldron enjoyed success on Tuesday, 21 May when a section of E Company 1RAR uncovered a well-concealed cache at ZAPU-MK camp 3. It contained three AK rifles, clothing and equipment, including the looted and damaged compass of RAR Corporal Erisha who was killed in action at camp 5 on 18 March. The next day, the BSAP arrested two ZAPU cadres, Patrick Sibanda and Michael Dhlodhlo, 38 kilometres south of Gokwe, bringing the score to 53 killed and 46 captured. Twenty-six men were thought to be at large.

JOC Cauldron kept E Company 1RAR at Kanyemba covering the area from the Sapi river eastward to the Hunyani and three troops of 2 Commando patrolling the escarpment from Makuti to the Chewore river and one troop at Sipolilo.

On Thursday, 23 May B Company SAP, patrolling the Rhodesian bank opposite Lusitu Boma, ten kilometres south of Chirundu, found two AK rifles, three grenades, 500 7.62mm intermediate rounds, 100 7.62mm short rounds, two RPG-2 rockets, two Tokarev magazines, one haversack, one pair of boots of the chevron pattern, ZANU pamphlets and a quantity of tinned

food. These were all lost during the aborted ZANU crossing on 26 March 1968 on Operation Cosmic and submerged during the recent Zambezi high-water level.

On Sunday, 26 May Patrick Sibanda showed the BSAP were the body of an MK cadre lay at the foot of the escarpment, 25 kilometres west of the Rukomechi tsetse-fly-research station. He told also how a raft bearing a large quantity of arms and ammunition had overturned and sunk off the Chewore confluence. JOC Cauldron withdrew the 2 Commando troop from Sipolilo on 28 May but kept the BSAP ground coverage elements there for another week. The ground coverage numbers in the Karoi–Mangula area were cut in half and two PATU sticks were withdrawn to Salisbury.

Operation Cauldron was declared over from 2200 hours on Friday, 31 May. The roadblock at Lion's Den had been removed two days previously but the army force levels remained the same. The RRAF reconstituted Kariba as its forward airfield (FAF 2) to support the border-control operation, Cardigan, which also required that patrols and ambushes continue.

Operation Cauldron had cost the lives of five Rhodesian servicemen (four whites and one African) and eleven wounded (nine whites and two Africans). In return, 41 ZAPU and 17 MK cadres had been killed, 37 ZAPU and 16 MK captured and nine ZAPU and five MK survivors had escaped. Of these 14 escapees, one was killed and two captured during Operation Excess in August 1968 and one captured in Operation Birch in December 1969–January 1970. Four became the quarry of Operation Glove of which three were captured, including Moffat Hadebe, and one was killed while attempting to escape into Zambia near Chirundu.

A result of Cauldron was that South Africa reinforced its police contingent in Rhodesia. Another important consequence was that the six-week operation 'blooded' most of the Rhodesian security forces and refined skills such as aerial reconnaissance and the use of helicopters in shuttling troops ahead of fleeing enemy. There were innovations too. The dropping of blocks of ice wrapped tightly in sacking solved the problem of supplying water from the air to troops in arid areas like the Zambezi valley. The ice shattered on impact, giving the troops something they had dreamed about.

The almost total success of Cauldron, however, led the Rhodesian public to believe that the Rhodesian security forces could deal with any threat. The commander of 1 Brigade, Brigadier Bob Prentice, said as much to Peter Carter, the British representative. Prentice declared that the morale of the Rhodesian army was “absolutely first class” and that the troops had adapted themselves to the tactics of the guerrillas, which he considered very unimaginative, and that their successes in the field had been outstanding. He added guardedly that the position could be held indefinitely, particularly with the assistance of the SAP. Whitehall shared this verdict although it credited ZAPU with an improvement in training and tactics, and emphasized the strain on the Rhodesian army of the continuous operations. Simultaneously, the defeat fomented already existing dissent in the ZAPU ranks rooted in the defeat in Operation Nickel. The young cadres, many of them press-ganged, questioned the strategy and tactics of the leadership in Lusaka. They also resented their comfortable lifestyle that contrasted with the harsh discipline enforced in the holding camps by flogging and imprisonment in deep holes in the ground. Steeped in political theory during their training in Cuba, Algeria and the Eastern bloc, the cadres were critical of the months wasted on Operation Cauldron in the camps south of the Chewore confluence away from the people they were supposed to be subverting. The intellectuals among the ranks resented the lack of interest in their ideological training, the legacy of the ZAPU contempt for the intellectuals of ZANU that contrasted with the political emphasis of the SAANC. This laid the seeds of a later mutiny on 11 March 1971. Their discontent also fed an existing ethnic division between James Chikerema, ZAPU’s Shona vice-president, and J.Z. Moyo, the Ndebele national treasurer. To put pressure on Zambia to cease assisting ZAPU and ZANU, the Rhodesian SAS damaged the key Luangwa river bridge near the Mozambican border on 9 June, killing a watchman in the process. This cut the Zambia–Malawi trunk road along which most of Zambia’s fuel was transported. Although of psychological value, the attack was of limited effect as trade was interrupted for only 15 days before a temporary bridge was in place on 26 June 1968. The bridge itself was easily repaired thereafter.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN:

OPERATION GLOVE, JUNE 1968

For the Rhodesian security forces there was an immediate distraction when, at 1130 hours on Wednesday, 19 June 1968, two survivors of Operation Cauldron were sighted at Marangora pan below the Zambezi escarpment, close to the main Makuti–Chirundu road. The tracks of four men were confirmed at 1235 hours. By 1630 hours the group was thought to number ten. Their tracks were followed westward and on Friday, 21 June the hunt was deemed sufficiently serious for Operation Glove with its JOC to be formed at Makuti.

1 Commando 1RLI, the SAS and three Police Reserve PATU sticks were supported by a Trojan from 4 Squadron. All waterholes in the area were ambushed. The tracks led to a base camp at a pool in a tributary of the Chikomba river, three kilometres north of the road to Nyamuomba farm. Meat found in the camp was deemed four days old.

Contact was made at 1421 hours on Monday, 24 June, 13 kilometres south of the main Makuti–Chirundu road and ten kilometres east of the Zambezi river. 1 Commando troops wounded and captured Jackson Malame, the MK political commissar of the ZAPU-MK headquarters section, and Zacks Choga, the ZAPU commissar. Both were armed with AK-47 rifles, 200 7.62mm rounds and two grenades. Malame died of his wounds but Choga, shot in the leg and back, survived and revealed he had last seen his commander, Moffat Hadebe, and his companion, John Mandivengerayi, at 1300 hours on 19 June at Marangora pan. Both were armed with AK rifles and a pistol and were intending to secure a lift to Salisbury on the way to their homes, Hadebe’s in Gwanda and Mandivengerayi’s in Bikita. JOC Glove responded by immediately increasing the roadblocks on the Salisbury road in an attempt to intercept Hadebe and Mandivengerayi. Choga said that

the other two survivors of Operation Cauldron, Harry Hondo and Eliot Ndhlovu, had parted company with him in the Sipolilo area with the intention of returning to Zambia.

The next day, 25 June, the sighting of two men near F hunting camp proved negative, as did the discovery of tracks at Mana Pools on the Zambezi's southern bank at 0900 hours. On 26 June, reinforced by two further Police Reserve PATU sticks, the patrolling and ambushing continued while the BSAP ground coverage units visited all the stores in the area but without result. On Friday, 28 June, after two days in Kariba hospital, Choga was taken to Marangora pan but all tracks of Hadebe and Mandivengerayi had been obliterated.

JOC Glove closed at midnight on Sunday, 30 June and all units reverted to border control. Support Group 1RLI replaced B Company SAP at Kanyemba on 1 July. B Company moved to cover the Chirundu area. On 4 July 1 Commando and the SAS returned to Salisbury.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN:

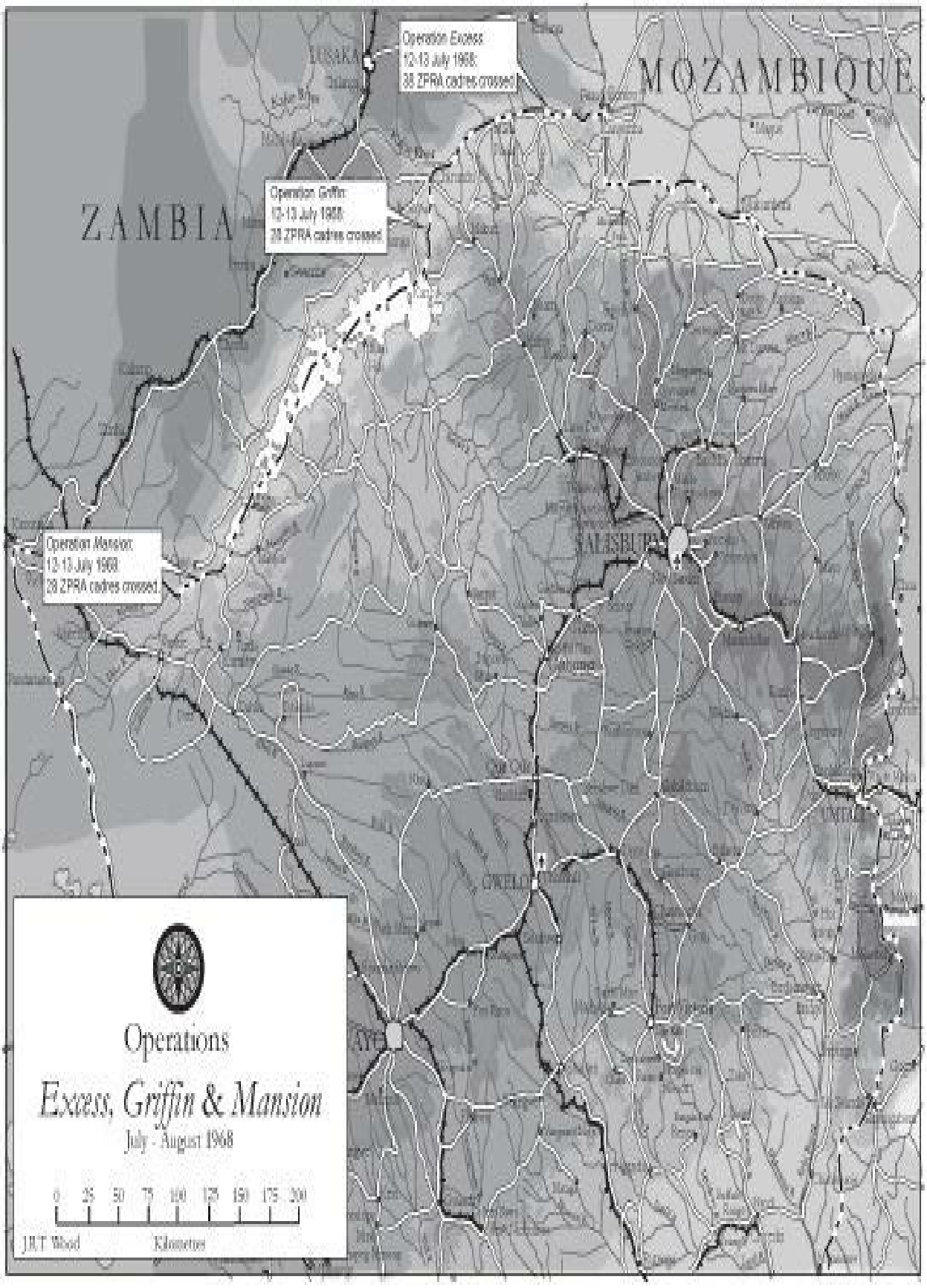
OPERATIONS GRIFFIN, MANSION AND EXCESS, JULY–AUGUST 1968

What the Rhodesian security forces did not know was that, despite the bloody defeats of operations Nickel and Cauldron, ZAPU was planning three more incursions and that, on Sunday, 7 July, Jason Z. Moyo briefed a new group of 91 cadres at Kaluwa camp on a fresh mission. He said they would make their way to Hartley, Gwelo, Gwanda, Filabusi, Wankie, Plumtree, Matopos, Nyamandhlovu and Umtali to recruit locals and train them in the use of weapons. Anyone who refused training would have his cattle killed.

The men of the first incursion comprised 38 ZAPU cadres, trained variously in Cuba, the Soviet Union, Algeria and Tanzania, and including three veterans of Operation Cauldron and one of Isotope. They were driven from Lusaka on Wednesday, 10 July in two Land Rovers and a three-ton truck to ZAPU's C2 camp, three kilometres east of the Musensenshi river. The platoon was divided into three eight-man sections, A, B and D, and two seven-man sections, C and E. The overall commander was Cuban-trained Daniel Makoni, who also led C Section while his deputy, Davidson Mutsinze, commanded D Section. Each section had a deputy commander, a political commissar and a medical orderly, except for E Section that lacked a political commissar. Their mission was to subvert local tribesmen in the Mount Darwin area and recruit some for training outside Rhodesia. If the number of recruits was small they would be taken to Botswana for onward transmission to Lusaka. If a large number was recruited, they would be transported across the Zambezi. Once Mount Darwin was successfully subverted, the group would move on to the Makoni Tribal Trust Land and Melsetter areas of the eastern districts to subvert their inhabitants before committing acts of terrorism. Names of contacts were supplied.

At 1800 hours on Thursday, 11 July, accompanied by a supply platoon from the base carrying two collapsible canvas canoes and a quantity of food, the platoon set off on a long night march eastward. They halted at midnight and were given cold food as fires were forbidden. They marched on at 0400 hours and at 0600 hours sighted the Zambezi, six kilometres east of the Chewore confluence. They lay low for the whole of 12 July, not smoking or moving around. At 2000 hours a reconnaissance party crossed the Zambezi and returned to say all was clear. Two cadres and their equipment, plus the boatman, were ferried across at a time.

By 0400 hours on Saturday, 13 July the platoon was across on the Rhodesian bank. Its members wore Chinese-style khaki battledress blouses and trousers and Warsaw Pact steel helmets. Most of them had boots with figure-of-8 soles but two had the Rhodesian army's Mars pattern and one was studded. Each man was carrying a rifle and 300 rounds of ammunition, four blocks of TNT, four grenades, eight detonators, slow- and quick-burning fuses, £2, two tins of rice, eight tins of beef, three tins of soup, three tins of condensed milk, one box of processed cheese, eight packets of Soviet soup, two packets of salt, three packets of ginger biscuits, one packet of sweets, one packet of powdered milk. The food was expected to last for 27 days by when they should have reached Mount Darwin. Each section leader was given a medical kit, a pair of binoculars, a transistor radio to listen to news broadcasts, two compasses and £8 for each man in his section. The platoon had a 1:250,000 map of Chipinga, Melsetter and Umtali and a 1:1,000,000 land apportionment map. Once across the Zambezi, the platoon set off in single file with three scouts leading. Marching at night and resting during the day, they followed a southeasterly compass bearing. Their presence was detected in late July and led to the mounting of Operation Excess.


Operation Excess
12-13 July 1968
38 ZPRA cadres crossed
Operation Griffin
12-13 July 1968
28 ZPRA cadres crossed
Operation Mansion
12-13 July 1968
28 ZPRA cadres crossed
MOZAMBIQUE
ZAMBIA
LUSAKA
SALISBURY
Operations
Excess, Griffin & Mansion
July - August 1968
0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200
J.R.T. Wood
Kilometres

The second platoon of 24 Tanzanian-trained cadres, also clad in khaki and Warsaw Pact steel helmets and commanded by Algerian-trained James Paratena and his deputy, Davidson Mpofu, were transported to ZAPU's DK camp (situated directly north of the western end of the Zambezi's Devil's gorge). There ZAPU's chief of staff, Robson Mabiyra, ordered them to train the locals of the Nkai-Lupane and Gokwe areas north of Bulawayo for the coming revolution, before attacking security-force posts to secure weapons and ammunition. He wanted them to obtain intelligence to facilitate ambushes and to attack the roads, railways, bridges, post offices, electricity pylons and water supplies. Then, accompanied by Dumiso Dabengwa of the ZAPU hierarchy, Gordon Butshe, ZAPU's representative in Livingstone, and two members of the SAANC, they marched to the northern bank of the Zambezi river, seven kilometres west of the Gwai river confluence. They reached their embarking point at 0700 hours on Friday 12 July. At 1830 hours the two ANC men ferried the platoon across to Rhodesia in two collapsible boats. At 2030 hours they set off in an easterly direction until they came to a steep hill covered with thick bush and camped there for the night. What they did not know was that they were on a promontory between the Gwai river and Devil's gorge. Their detection there three days later would lead to Operation Mansion.

The third platoon of 28 khaki-clad cadres was ordered by Jason Z. Moyo of ZAPU to indoctrinate locals, train recruits and commit acts of terrorism in the Hartley area of the Midlands and elsewhere. The men were driven from Kaluwa camp in a truck and two Land Rovers on Friday, 12 July to the Lusitu area where they were divided into a command section and three eight-man sections of Tanzanian-trained men. The command section comprised Joel Daki, the Algerian-trained platoon commander; Kavava Chamunorwa, his Soviet-trained deputy commander and political commissar; two scouts, Mathias Enoch Mawere (alias Meya), a former employee of the Rhodesian National Parks, and Jaison Christopher Jeru, a recent recruit. Each section had a commander, deputy commander, political commissar and a medical orderly.

An SAANC member issued the platoon with packs, steel helmets, AK and

SKS rifles, three RPD machine guns, three RPG-2 rocket launchers and grenades. Each man was given a knife, a packet of needles and two rolls of cotton, a pair of scissors, a flat tin opener, safety fuse, a 200-gram and three 75-gram slabs of TNT, eight detonators, a mechanical triggering device, a roll of detonating cord, a landmine and two tins of grenade primers. Each section was equipped with a torch and 24 torch batteries, a transistor radio, an ear piece and 24 batteries, a pair of binoculars, a pair of side-cutter pliers, two compasses, a ruler, a set square, an eraser, a box of crayons and 20 lead pencils, a geometry set, a pair of dividers and a writing pad. The SAANC cadre then lectured them on tactics and safety precautions.

Having waited for nightfall on Saturday, 13 July, the platoon and a boatman marched off at 1900 hours toward the river carrying a two-man collapsible boat. Waiting for them at the Zambezi, 31 kilometres south of Chirundu, was another boatman and a four-man dugout canoe. They were ferried across to the Rhodesian bank and took up defensive positions close to it. Once everyone was across, the platoon marched southeastward through the night, aiming for the confluence of the Umfuli and Sanyati rivers. They halted at 0530 hours on 14 July, posted sentries and rested for the day. At 1800 hours they set off again but at 2000 hours, somewhat disorientated, arrived back at the Zambezi. They refilled their water bottles and marched eastward until 0500 hours on Monday, 15 July when they halted and made camp for the day in a dry riverbed. The discovery of their presence would result in Operation Griffin.

Early on Sunday, 14 July the 24-man ZAPU platoon, commanded by James Paratena, encamped at the western end of the Devil’s gorge, sent out a reconnaissance group. They returned later to say they had found a large river, the Gwai, which they had followed to its confluence with the Zambezi, five kilometres to the east. The group concluded they were on an island but in fact were on a peninsula formed by the two rivers.

On 15 July they tried, without avail, to find a place to cross the Gwai river. This persuaded Paratena that he could not confine his men to moving at night. The next morning his men walked along the northern bank of the Gwai river toward the Zambezi. At 1100 hours they spotted a BSAP patrol boat moving up the Gwai. Convinced they had been seen, they took cover and

rested there until dark. Then they attempted to move eastward and spent the night near the Gwai confluence. What they did not know was that earlier, at 1030 hours, a patrolling BSAP African constable had found a telltale figure-of-8 bootprint in the western neck of the peninsula, close to the Gwai. His report led to the deployment of PATU sticks and their discovery of the tracks of ten men near the crossing point along with ten rounds of 7.62mm ammunition and an entrenching tool. JOC Mansion was formed at Kamativi at 1800 hours the next day, 17 July, with C and D companies 1 RAR and four PATU sticks under command. Roadblocks were set up and stop groups sealed off the Gwai peninsula; the RRAF established a forward air support control unit at Wankie airfield.

The other two ZAPU platoons were undiscovered. Daniel Makoni's men spent Tuesday, 16 July in a dry riverbed in the Chewore safari area. They were confident enough of their anonymity to shoot a buffalo and dry the meat over an open fire. That night they resumed their march on a compass bearing of 105°.

North of the mountains of the Kariba gorge, Joel Daki, the commander of the 28-man ZAPU platoon, had called a halt at dawn on Monday, 15 July and allowed his men to rest in a dry riverbed while he sent three men, including his two scouts, Mawere and Jeru, to find a more suitable campsite. Like so many of their predecessors, three got lost and argued over the route before returning to their companions. They split up and Jeru deserted, heading north through the night to Chirundu. He hid his weapons before surrendering at 0600 hours on Tuesday, 16 July at the police station to Detective Inspector Johne Fletcher, the commander of SB in the Lomagundi district. Before then Mawere and his companion had found Daki and led the platoon on a night march toward the Kuburi range, northwest of the Kariba–Makuti road, where Mawere believed water could be found in a riverbed.

Enemy dead after the airstrike on the Devil’s gorge, Operation Mansion.
Photo Masodja

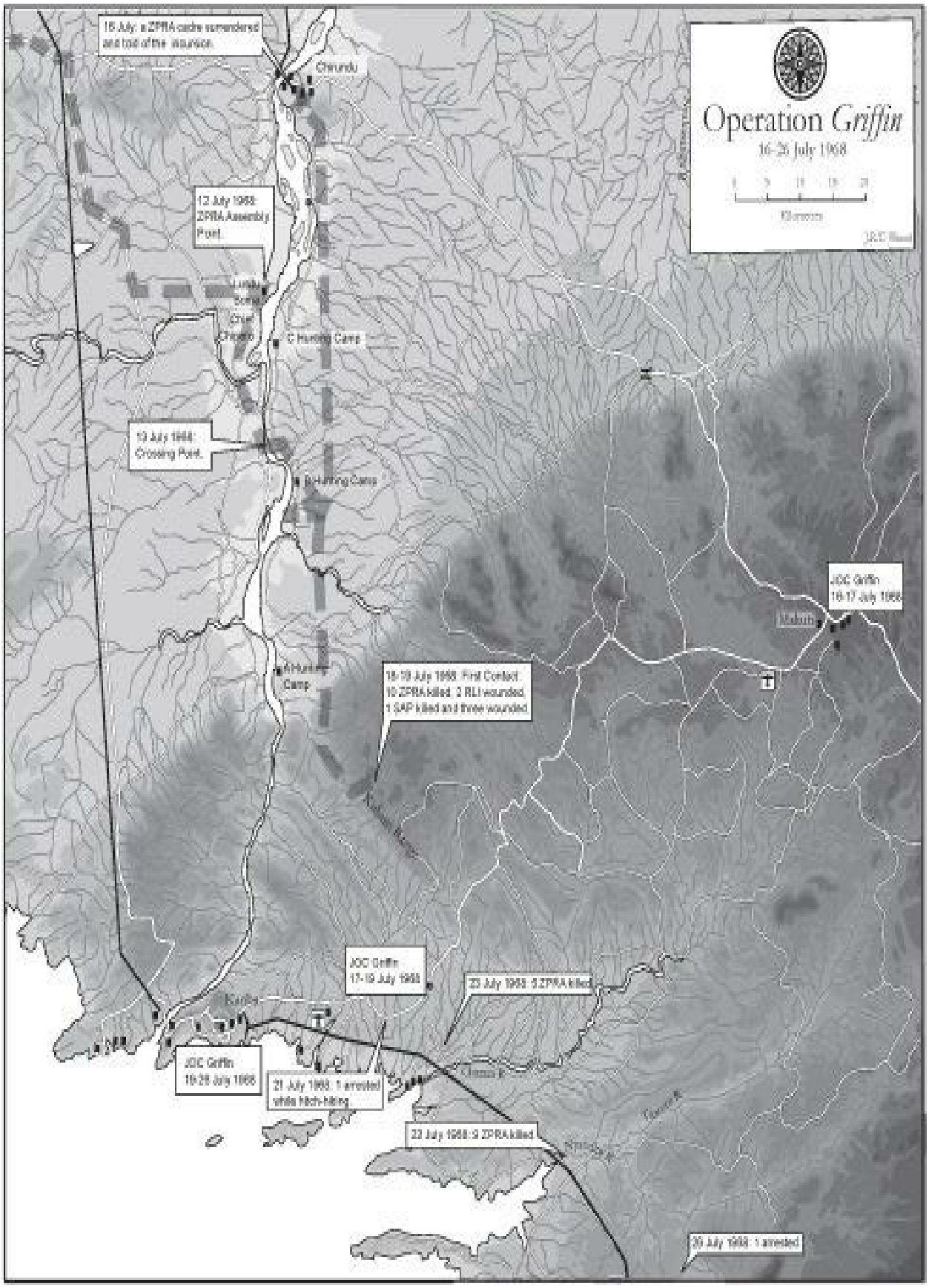
An Alouette III uplifts an SAP stick from their OP position on the Zambezi escarpment.

From Jeru the Rhodesians learned how many men had crossed, their aims and their modus operandi. He explained that he had crossed into Zambia in early June 1968 on a mission to penetrate ZAPU. He had been accepted and was sent to Tanzania on a crash course in weapon handling so that he could guide the ZAPU platoon to the confluence of the Umnyati and Sanyati rivers. He denied knowing the platoon's mission or the personnel because he had spent only a short time with them. All he could say was that some of his comrades had trained in the Soviet Union and some in Cuba and that most of them were Shona speakers. Fletcher concluded that Jeru was telling the truth even if it was surprising that he had been entrusted with such a task after such a short period in ZAPU ranks. His clothing and weapons tended to confirm his story, as did his activist nationalist background which ZAPU headquarters in Lusaka would have been able to confirm. His version of the treatment he received in Zambia and Tanzania confirmed information the SB possessed. Describing the modus operandi, Jeru told of marching at night, basing up with the three sections ten–20 metres apart with a perimeter guard doing hourly stints, meals cooked at midday using smokeless, solid fuel tablets, the burying of debris, the order of march, the slowness of progress due to the weight of packs, the crossing of roads on balled fists and knees to leave pug marks and signalling by slapping on rifle butts and handclaps. Jeru spoke of the low morale, the arguments and the unhappiness over the money given to Daki and his deputy and the £64 held by the section leaders when the cadres were given only £2 each. Jeru had received £1/10/0 and a one-rand note and was told that the rand was acceptable in Rhodesia. He added that his companions were aware that the men captured on Operation Cauldron were being sentenced in Rhodesian courts to 20 years in prison.

Jeru led Fletcher 400 metres south of Chirundu to where he had stashed his AK rifle, his Walther pistol and magazines. He was then flown by helicopter to show Fletcher the crossing point. There were fresh figure-of-8 spoor of some 34 men along with a similar Soviet sugar label, as found on Operation

Cauldron. Next, Jeru guided the helicopter to where Daki's men had returned to the river.

Responding, the border-control unit, E Company 1RAR, established a JOC Griffin at Makuti at 1600 hours. Four officers and 26 men of Major van Eyk's B Company SAP followed the tracks from two kilometres south of B hunting camp and two kilometres north of the Sharu river. 3 Commando 1RLI reinforced the JOC at first light on 17 July and its commander, Major Robert Southey, took command of the JOC.


Operation Griffin
16–26 July 1968
16 July: a ZIPRA cadre surrendered and told of the incursion.
Chirundu
12 July 1968: ZIPRA Assembly Point
C Hunting Camp
13 July 1968: Crossing Point.
B Hunting Camp
A Hunting Camp
JOC Griffin 16-17 July 1968
Lusaka
18-19 July 1968: First Contact: 10 ZIPRA killed, 2 RLI wounded, 1 SAP killed and three wounded.
JOC Griffin 17-19 July 1968
23 July 1968: 5 ZIPRA killed
Kariba
JOC Griffin 19-26 July 1968
21 July 1968: 1 arrested while hitch-hiking
22 July 1968: 3 ZIPRA killed
Sinazongwe
Gwembe
30 July 1968: 1 arrested

Simultaneously, the 27 men of Joel Daki's ZAPU platoon had walked through the night into the mountains to a position 18 kilometres northeast of Kariba and would rest for the day, watching the helicopter traffic. That evening they moved into a strong defensive position in the deep gully of the dry Nyadaza river, cutting northeastward through the Kuburi range. The gully would become known as Griffin's gorge.

While van Eyk's B Company SAP followed the spoor of Daki's platoon southward across the Chironga river into the steep escarpment 22 kilometres northeast of Kariba, JOC Griffin ordered E Company 1RAR to cover the road from Nyamuomba to the Nyakasanga bridge. To be closer to the line of march, Southey moved the JOC to the Charara turn-off on the Kariba road, 14 kilometres south of Griffin's gorge. At 1700 hours he deployed 3 Commando in blocking positions northwestward along the Kuburi range toward the Kariba gorge. He withdrew 2 Platoon 2 (Independent) Company RRR, from border control to guard Kariba power station. Van Eyk's men, having found some abandoned equipment at 1800 hours, camped on the tracks and were reinforced by Second Lieutenant Marillier's 14 Platoon E Company 1RAR in preparation for the continued follow-up at first light.

At dawn on Thursday, 18 July, a clearance patrol from the ambush position of Second Lieutenant Jeremy Strong's 12 Troop 3 Commando came across the tracks of Daki's platoon near the Nyadaza river. Strong, a winner of the sword of honour at Sandhurst, radioed the JOC asking for an African tracker and two four-man sticks of 14 Troop. These were flown to him by helicopter. The JOC ordered B Company SAP and Marillier's 14 Platoon to move southward toward Strong.

With two sticks of his 12 Troop backing up his African tracker, Strong set off at 1030 hours following the spoor northeast up the dry riverbed. He was flanked on the north by his other two 12 Troop sticks and on the south the two 14 Troop sticks. At 1100 hours Strong's men entered the steep-sided Griffin's gorge. At 1145 hours they halted to examine two packs. When they advanced another ten metres, Lance-Corporal Lahee, perhaps because he was wearing a bright green knitted tea cosy on his head, was shot at by ten ZAPU men from under a large overhanging boulder.

The tracking party was immediately driven into cover by accurate machine-gun and rifle fire. A sniper also shot at the 12 Troop sticks moving on the northern ridge and hit Trooper A.F. le Roux in the pelvis. Le Roux responded with a burst from his MAG, killing the sniper. Caught in an exposed position on the southern ridge, the 14 Troop sticks were unable to provide effective covering fire as Strong and Lahee crawled forward on a ledge overlooking the ZAPU cave. There they tossed grenades into it, discharged two 32Z rifle grenades and fired their rifles, emptying a magazine each. The ZAPU riposte, including RPG rockets, made their retreat impossible. At 1315 hours MAG fire from the Alouette flown by Squadron Leader Norman Walsh and Sergeant Kevin Smithdorff allowed Strong to withdraw his tracking party to safer ground. ZAPU responded with heavy automatic fire at Walsh and at the two following helicopters of flight lieutenants Michael R. Grier and R. Graydon and Flight Lieutenant Peter J. Nicholls and Sergeant T.J. van den Bergh, as they flew in low, attempting to keep ZAPU heads down. Walsh again braved enemy fire to evacuate the wounded le Roux to Kariba. When he returned he remained in the area despite his helicopter having been hit.

Strong climbed the northern ridge to confer with van Eyk and Marillier. Southey arrived by helicopter to take command. Strong decided that SAP Captain Nicholas Henning of Durban should lead an SAP section along the northern ridge to attack the ZAPU platoon from the eastern end while Marillier's men advanced from the north. Unfortunately Henning descended into the gully too soon, arriving almost directly in front of Daki's men. Their fire at a range of 30 metres forced Henning's men into cover while the ZAPU men taunted, "Come in you Boers and get us out." Sustained, accurate fire from two RPD machine guns wounded Constable A.J. van Gruenen and Lieutenant Vorster. Constable Dirk Hattingh dashed forward to help them and was blinded in the eye and peppered in the nose, ear, left arm and leg by splinters from bullet strikes in front of him. He kept returning firing.

Marillier's attack failed and Southey and 12 Troop attempted to relieve them by advancing from the western end but were again driven to ground. ZAPU fire also stemmed an advance by a stick of 11 Troop who had arrived to bolster 14 Troop's position on the southern flank. Trooper Wepener was seriously wounded in the right buttock and the helicopter providing MAG fire was hit in a rotor blade and the instrument panel. It had to return to Kariba.

The SAP kept trying to withdraw but without success. The cost was the wounding of Captain van Eeden. Southey and Walsh decided to call in a RRAF airstrike. Southey then ordered 11 and 12 troops to withdraw under the cover of white phosphorus grenades. A helicopter evacuated Trooper Wepener.

At 1515 hours, directed by Walsh, Flying Officers Tony van Rooyen-Smit and Law dived their Provost aircraft in repeatedly to drop frantan (napalm) bombs on the target. At 1600 hours Constable Daniel du Toit from Wentworth in Durban opened rapid fire on the ZAPU position, trying to divert attention from the wounded. Exposed, he was killed by a bullet through the head. The Provosts kept up the attacks until 1745 hours when they ran out of frantan, having dropped 20 bombs. The close proximity of the trapped South Africans meant that an airstrike by two Hawker Hunters was cancelled. 13 Troop 3 Commando was deployed into stop positions to the southwest. In the dusk Southey ordered Marillier to lead a ten-man section from the northern edge to relieve the South Africans but nine of his African RAR soldiers found cover and only Marillier reached the South African position. The darkness at 1930 hours allowed the South Africans to withdraw at last. At 2200 hours Nicholls and Grier, flying with great skill in helicopters not equipped for night flying, evacuated the SAP wounded. Reinforced by six PATU sticks, the BSAP Support Unit and RLI Support Group's mortars brought in from Kanyemba, Southey positioned his forces in ambush positions around the gully to cut off any escape. To keep the ZAPU men in position, Trojan aircraft dropped flares until midnight. Southey planned further frantan strikes and a mortar bombardment in the morning.

Southey had not closed the net, however, and during the night the bulk of the ZAPU platoon slipped away. At first light on Friday, 19 July the Provosts bombed the ZAPU position again with frantan, driving four ZAPU cadres toward the stop positions. Three were killed by 14 Troop and one by PATU. At 0736 hours Strong and 12 Troop cleared the ZAPU position, finding weapons and equipment and then moved up the valley to the east with 14 Troop and 14 Platoon E Company 1RAR in support. At 0900 hours, 40 metres up the valley, 12 Troop killed a badly burned cadre hiding on the northern bank. Shortly afterward two men suffering from burns fired on Strong's scout, Lance-Corporal Stapleberg, from a cave. 12 Troop shot them

dead. Southey ordered Marillier's 14 Platoon back to the contact area where they found a further four bodies and quantities of equipment including four 1:250,000 maps of Kariba, Copper Queen, Salisbury and Hartley. On the Hartley map all the schools and missions were ringed in red. In the pockets of the dead were lists of contacts in Rhodesia.

At 1145 hours Southey ordered Marillier to ambush the contact position while the rest of the troops, the ZAPU bodies and their weapons and equipment were flown out by helicopter. The JOC moved to Kariba police station where the second in command of the RLI, Major John Hickman, took over. Reinforced that afternoon by 2 Commando less one troop, Hickman established blocking positions and ordered intensive patrolling. The weapons haul included six AK and two SKS rifles, one RPD machine gun, three pistols, one RPG-2 rocket launcher, one RPG projectile, two slabs of TNT, 20 sticks of 75-gram TNT, 1,273 rounds of assorted ammunition and eleven grenades. The dead were the commander of A Section, Alphonse Mawane, and his deputy, Godfrey Nhavira; B Section commander and former member of the BSAP, Gordon Mutazu; his political commissar, G.M. Rambakupetwa; B Section members Enos Furamera, German, Billy Tshabangu (alias Ngwenya) and Maxwell Wayire; and C Section members Elliot Gotoza, Stanley Tswarayi and Makina.

At 1000 hours on 20 July the tracks of between six and 12 men were found near the Muto river, seven kilometres to the northeast of the contact area. The follow-up by 13 Troop and two trackers continued until last light.

At 1100 hours on Sunday, 21 July the BSAP arrested a wounded member of A Section, Mvinjelwa Ncube, attempting to hitch a lift on the Kariba–Makuti road. The search of the contact area turned up more weapons and ammunition.

On Monday, 22 July fresh tracks were found three kilometres north of the Nyaodza river mouth on Kariba dam by 13 Troop. Hickman deployed 3 Commando and a platoon of B Company SAP in a stop group along the Nyaodza river. He had 2 Commando patrolling the Kariba gorge. E Company 1RAR covered Makuti, Nyakasanga, G hunting camp and Nyamuomba. Kariba airfield was protected by 2 Platoon 2 (Independent) Company RRR and elements of the RRAF Volunteer Reserve, while 2 Commando

dispatched a boat patrol to intercept anyone attempting to cross Kariba to Zambia.

At 1315 hours just north of Nyaodza river mouth 13 Troop's scout sighted his ZAPU quarry in a gully and opened fire. 3 Commando Sergeant-Major Albert Tourle and a trooper immediately mounted a rocky outcrop to dominate the gully with an MAG and a rifle. His shouted orders drew fire. Corporals Johnstone and Strydom climbed the high ground on the right to eliminate a sniper position and, once his men had flanked the position, Tourle had 60mm mortar bombs dropped in front of the position to deter a breakout while his troopers raked the gully with rifle and MAG fire and lobbed phosphorus grenades. Tourle then had the gully swept. Corporal Coom was slightly wounded before Johnstone killed the man shooting at him. The phosphorus grenades ignited the bush, causing the ZAPU ammunition to explode for about half an hour before a final sweep was possible. In the gully lay nine ZAPU dead, six of them killed by Tourle. The nine were Joel Daki, the ZAPU platoon commander; Kakava Chamunorwa, his Soviet-trained deputy; Meya, his ex-National Parks guide; Patrick Moyo, the A Section medical orderly; Stile Ndare and Kefasi Ngwenya (alias Machenesu), both A Section members; Leonard Sigola of B Section; Ephinos Mpofu, the C Section commander; and his C Section member, Saul Gwazinyana.

The funeral of SAP Constable Danie du Toit, the first SAP member to be killed in action in Rhodesia, July 1968. From left: Assistant Commissioner Lawrence Lamont (BSAP), Wing Commander Chris Damms (RRAF) and Lieutenant-Colonel A.M. Oscroft (Rhodesian Army). Photo Blue and Old Gold

D Company 1RAR search a captured terrorist, Operation Mansion. Photo Masodja

RAR troops of 11 Platoon move in on the enemy in the Devil's gorge, Operation Mansion. Photo Masodja

That day, 22 July, JOC Griffin suffered a setback when Grier's Alouette III crashed. It was recovered and repaired. The JOC withdrew B Company SAP to Chirundu but kept 2 and 3 commandos in the Kariba area and E Company 1RAR in Makuti, ambushing and looking for tracks at water holes and the like.

At 1100 hours on Tuesday, 23 July fresh tracks of five ZAPU men heading southeast were found three kilometres northwest of the Charara turn-off on the Kariba–Makuti road. Sergeant Reynolds and 12 Troop were deployed and at 1534 hours caught up with the five ZAPU cadres near a streambed a kilometre north of the Charara river and three kilometres northeast of Charara camp. While Reynold's section tackled the enemy, the other section went south to the river to form a stop group. All five ZAPU cadres were killed, two of whom had been severely burned during the airstrikes of 18–19 July. Among the dead were Pepisi Mashingaidze Hadebe of A Section and Thomas Gondo and John Zimonde of C Section. In the late afternoon tracks of a single man were found nearby and then lost. The tally was 24 killed, two captured and two outstanding.

JOC Griffin retained 2 and 3 commandos, B Company SAP and E Company 1RAR covering the Zambezi valley and ordered them to check for further incursions between Kariba and Kanyemba on the Mozambican border. No one knew yet of the incursion of Daniel Makoni's 38 ZAPU men in the Chewore safari area.

On 24 and 25 July the searches for the two survivors in the Kariba area proved fruitless. On 26 July, west of the Nyaodza river in the Urungwe Tribal Trust Land southeast of Kariba, Mathias Enoch Mawere, Daki's guide, was captured by the BSAP after being betrayed by Africans there despite being a local himself. He showed where he had hidden his weapons at Ma's Luck mine. The score was 24 killed, three captured and one outstanding who might

have died from burns. The haul of weapons was 18 AK and five SKS rifles, 35 rifle magazines, one Walther pistol, three RPD machine guns, six RPD magazines, three RPG-2 rocket launchers, 16 RPG rockets, 58 grenades, 4,985 7.62mm rounds, 58 grenades, 111 75-gram cylinders of TNT, 19 200-gram slabs of TNT, five anti-personnel mines, unspecified packs, compasses and water bottles. JOC Griffin closed at 1200 hours on 26 July.

Troops of 3 Commando 1RLI were deployed to the Chewore safari area, Dean's camp on the Angwa river and Mashumbi Pools on the Hunyani river, to search for signs of other incursions. 2 Commando patrolled the Kariba range and gorge. E Company 1RAR remained at Makuti with platoons at Old G hunting camp and the Nyakasanga–Hell's Gate area. B Company SAP patrolled the Zambezi from Nyamuomba to Mana Pools.

In the aftermath of Operation Griffin, Strong commended lance-corporals Lahee and Stapleberg and Sergeant Reynolds for their courage and leadership. Strong, Tourle, Lahee and Squadron Leader Walsh were awarded the Bronze Cross of Rhodesia. Military Forces Commendation (Operational) medals went to Major Southey, flight lieutenants Grier, Nicholls and van Rooyen-Smit, Air Lieutenant Law, and sergeants Graydon, Smithdorff and van den Bergh. The police commissioner, James Spink, expressed his admiration for the close co-operation between the three services. The commander of 2 Brigade, Brigadier Peter Walls, however, decried the lack of courage, determination and fighting ability of 14 Platoon E Company 1RAR. He criticized B Company SAP for including nearly all its officers in the operation to the detriment of operations elsewhere. He commended the "fantastic accuracy" the airstrikes of van Rooyen-Smit and Law.

The Rhodesian security forces had not been able to concentrate their entire attention on the Kariba area because on Thursday, 18 July, while Joel Daki's ZAPU men still held the upper hand in Griffin's gorge, James Paratena's 24-man ZAPU platoon, trapped on the Gwai-Zambezi peninsula, had become aware that they were being tracked and attempted to conceal their tracks. Then they dropped occasional 7.62mm pistol rounds and finally left packs, steel helmets and entrenching tools in a pile as bait for an ambush. After waiting for two hours with no sign of their pursuers, the cadres lifted their ambush at 1720 hours and attempted to recover their kit. As they did, nine

men of Second Lieutenant Noel Morgan-Davies's 10 Platoon D Company 1RAR, reinforcing a PATU stick, opened fire. The ZAPU men held their ground for 30 minutes before withdrawing, regrouping and returning to collect the equipment during the night; they missed a few items which the troops would find the next day. Given his enemy's good defensive position on a ridge and the lateness of the hour, Morgan-Davies withdrew his men a short distance under covering MAG fire from a helicopter which killed Paul Mpofu, the deputy commander of ZAPU A Section.

JOC Mansion responded by deploying 12 Platoon to a fishing camp a few kilometres upstream on the Zambezi and planned an airstrike for the morning. The searching aircraft had kept the ZAPU platoon under cover. During the night, Paratena ordered three men to cross the Gwai but had to pull them out when they nearly drowned, losing an SKS rifle and the platoon's rope. The men then split up into small groups and withdrew to the caves and overhanging rocks on the 500-foot-high southern flank of the Zambezi's Devil's gorge.

During the night of 18–19 July 12 Platoon moved into a blocking position on the narrowest part of the peninsula and in the morning found no sign of anyone crossing it. A search of the contact area at dawn by Second Lieutenant Howard J. Inman's 11 Platoon turned up weapons and equipment and the spoor of ten men heading north from it toward the Zambezi and then southeastward toward the Gwai river. It seemed that the group was from ZAPU because equipment included a Soviet steel helmet with J.E. Vito written on the chinstrap in ball pen, a camouflaged beret, a Soviet grenade, four Chinese water bottles, three fully loaded AK magazines, a mess tin containing a packet of soup and a quantity of Soviet solid fuel for cooking and a fragment of the Zimbabwe Review of 1 June 1968.

The Rhodesian security forces, however, still puzzled over which of the factions they were confronting and what their objectives were. By Friday, 19 July they knew that on Operation Griffin they faced ZAPU but wondered if the men on the Gwai peninsula belonged to ZANU because of the recent ZANU incursions nearby. As the OAU liberation committee was meeting in Algeria and had declared they would support only one of the factions in each region to be liberated, the Rhodesians concluded that ZAPU and ZANU were

seeking to prove their militancy. The Rhodesians also knew that there was a ZAPU build-up at Kalomo, directly north of the crossing point used by Paratena. The Rhodesians concluded they were dealing with ZAPU in both areas and surmised they could be reconnaissance and base-building groups preparing the way for main groups to cross or were quick hit-and-run operations with targets close to the Zambezi to attract publicity. What worried the Rhodesians was that anything larger than these simultaneous incursions would stretch their ability to contain them. They also suspected there was another as yet undiscovered infiltration.

His follow-up slowed by the rough, broken terrain, at 1730 hours Inman stopped for the night to ambush the gully running north–south between the peninsula's two main flat-topped hills. JOC Mansion withdrew Morgan-Davies and his RAR and PATU sticks to Msuna and left the follow up to Inman's 11 Platoon. Two soldiers were flown out, one injured in a rockfall and the other with influenza. The JOC reinforced Msuna with the Mortar Platoon Support Company 1RAR and provided constant air cover by Trojan, Cessna 185 and Police Reserve Air Wing aircraft to contain the enemy in the area. The JOC agreed they were dealing with ZAPU. They planned to continue the follow-up and the air activity at first light on Saturday, 20 July.

At 1930 hours his sentry, PWO Wupala, drew Inman's attention to approaching whistling and other noises beyond 2 Section's front. Inman joined 2 Section and when the noises were 30 metres away, he threw a light grenade and ordered his troops to fire and throw grenades. The noises ceased and there was no further action that night except for the firing of a red flare at the Sebungwe narrows to the southwest.

Dawn on 20 July revealed a dropped AK rifle and a medical pack and the spoor of seven men heading eastward away from the ambush. At 1210 hours, following a well-used northward path down the steep slopes of the Devil's gorge, Inman's men drew a heavy volume of fire from 15 ZAPU men holed up in caves overlooking them. He withdrew his men under cover of smoke grenades and called for an airstrike. The supporting helicopters flown by Terry Jones and his technician, Willy Armitage, and by the redoubtable Mark McLean and his technician, Corporal John Ness, obliged but their machine-gun fire had little effect.

At 1430 hours the forward air controller, Squadron Leader Peter Cooke, flying a Trojan, called in an airstrike. He and McLean marked the target with tracer fire for successive attacks by two Vampires, four Hunters and a Canberra with cannon and rockets and fragmentation bombs. The airstrikes lasted until 1600 hours when 12 Platoon was flown forward to assist Inman in clearing the area. They found the bodies of Simon Mate and Elias Mazabuka of B Section and Simon Simenya Ndhlovu, the political commissar of C Section, and captured four wounded men: Kenny Ndhlovu of A Section, Jimmy Bhebe of B Section and Evans Mpofu and Esler (alias Israel) Moyo from C Section. A large quantity of weapons, packs and Warsaw Pact steel helmets was recovered.

Lieutenant-Colonel William A. Godwin, the commanding officer of 1RAR, and twin brother of Major Walter Godwin, took over command of the JOC at Kamativi and sent B Company 1RAR to the blocking position at Msuna. He kept D Company's headquarters element with him and deployed C Company on border control in the Deka and Binga areas. The RRAF supplied him with a Provost bombed up with frantan to assist the helicopters in giving immediate air support. The stop line, however, proved porous that night because it was penetrated by Nelson Kumalo, the B Section medical orderly, who surrendered on Sunday, 21 July to a bus driver two kilometres from Msuna on the Deka road. This brought the score to five captured, four killed and 16 outstanding. Interrogation of the captured revealed the strength of the group.

The Mortar Platoon manned the stop line during the night of 21–22 July and repelled several attempts by seven to ten terrorists to escape. At first light on 22 July an 81mm mortar barrage and a surrender call from a sky-shouting aircraft preceded a sweep by the Mortar Platoon and B and D companies 1RAR. Progress was again slow due to the difficult terrain and by nightfall only one-third of the area had been covered but five ZAPU cadres were captured. The score was four killed, ten captured, one unconfirmed kill and ten outstanding. Five of the captured men were kept in the area to recover the weapons and equipment.

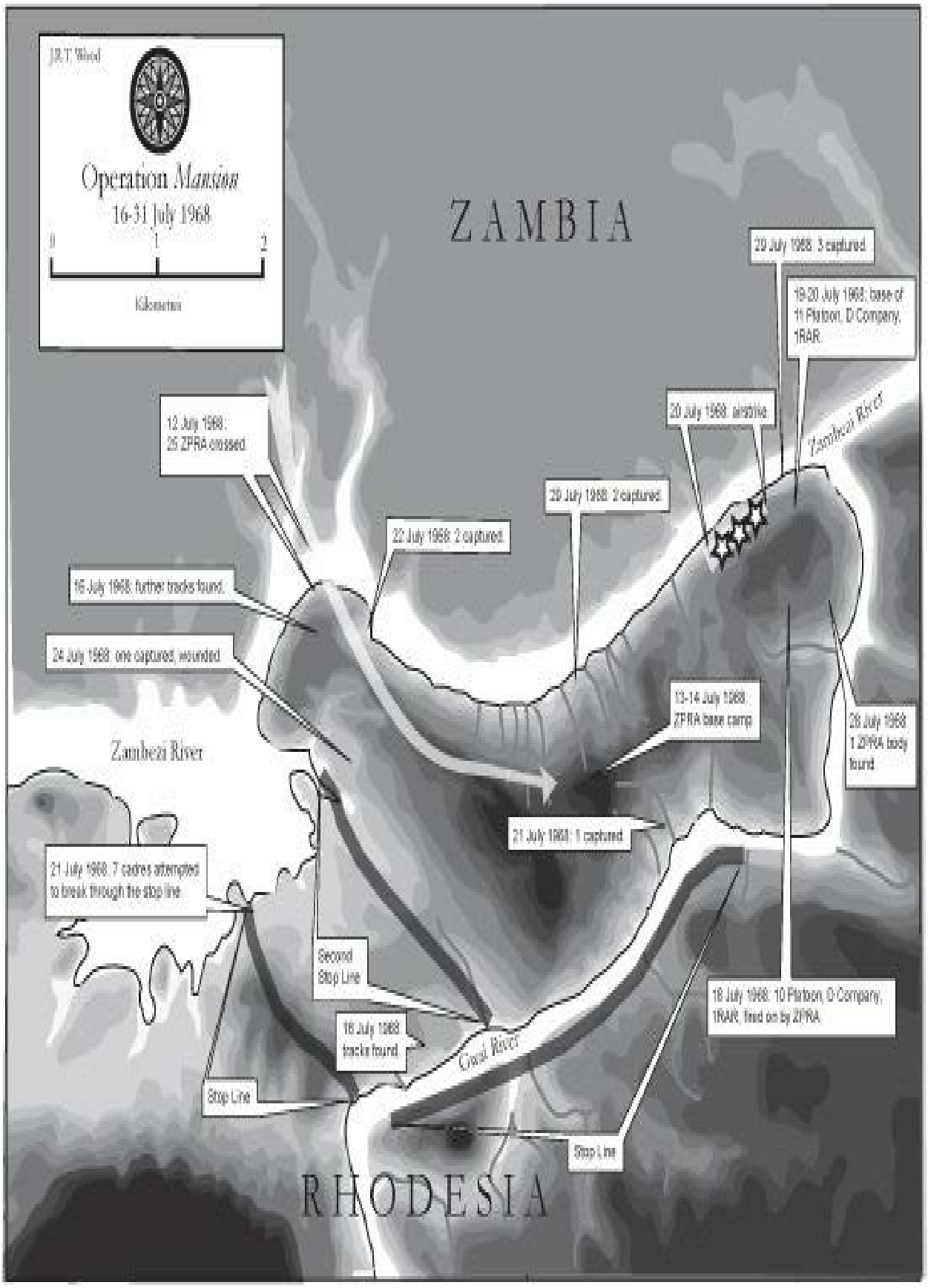
There were no further indications of infiltrators outside the operational area, and it was believed that the majority outstanding was still on the peninsula. In

the afternoon a patrol from Second Lieutenant Robin J. Ford's 6 Platoon B Company 1RAR contacted and captured two cadres at the western end of the Devil's gorge. That evening an unarmed ZAPU cadre surrendered to a patrol from 12 Platoon close to the Gwai river and a kilometre south of the site of the airstrike. He said he was encouraged to do so by the sky-shouting.

The JOC tallied the score as four dead and eleven captured. The captured weaponry and equipment comprised a pistol, six AK and seven SKS rifles, two RPD machine guns, 5,500 7.62mm rounds, two RPG-2 rocket launchers, 15 RPG rockets, 57 grenades, 15 slabs of TNT, 90 explosive charges, six Soviet POMZ-2 anti-personnel mines, a boobytrap, entrenching tools in canvas carriers, a transistor radio, a pup tent, 22 rucksacks and 18 steel helmets. The JOC planned to have troops resweep the peninsula to push the survivors onto the stop line. It ordered the engineers to clear a track capable of taking Land Rovers from Msuna to the stop line to save the use of helicopters. During the night there were again enemy attempts to get through the stop line.

The sweep on Tuesday, 23 July netted a cadre and further weapons and ammunition. The search of the area continued. The score was four killed and eleven captured, including George Moyo and Langton Mhlangu from A Section; Rose Moyo, the commander of B Section; and Davidson Mpofu, the commander, Misheck Sibanda, his deputy and Demo Moyo from C Section.

The search on Wednesday, 24 July yielded a wounded cadre, Lot Nyati of B Section, hiding in a cave. He told how his leader, James Paratena, had been with him on 21 July and expressed a desire to surrender. Elsewhere, a cache of tinned food was ambushed that night. As there was no indication of anyone escaping the area, the stop line was kept in place and the sweep continued.


J.R.T. Wood
Operation Mansion
16-31 July 1968
0
1
2
Kilometres
ZAMBIA
29 July 1968: 3 captured.
19-20 July 1968: base of 11 Platoon, D Company, 1RAR.
20 July 1968: airstrike.
Zambezi River
12 July 1968: 25 ZPRA crossed.
22 July 1968: 2 captured.
20 July 1968: 2 captured.
16 July 1968: further tracks found.
24 July 1968: one captured, wounded.
13-14 July 1968: ZPRA base camp
28 July 1968: 1 ZPRA body found.
Zambezi River
21 July 1968: 1 captured.
21 July 1968: 7 cadres attempted to break through the stop line.
Second Stop Line
18 July 1968: tracks found.
Stop Line
Stop Line
18 July 1968: 10 Platoon, D Company, 1RAR, fired on by ZPRA.
RHODESIA

The JOC ordered the engineers to excavate a cave that had collapsed at the site of the airstrike and from which an offensive smell was emanating. When nothing was found on 25 July, the JOC considered using harassing mortar fire in likely areas and ordered the PATU sticks to examine the roads from Msuna to Deka and to the Gwai river drift. The CID and SB were assigned the southwestern swathe of country between the Gwai and Matetsi rivers.

On Friday, 26 July the JOC reinforced the search with A Company 1RAR joining D Company and the Mortar Platoon, while B Company manned the stop line and C Company acted as the JOC's reserve at Kamativi. C Company sent a platoon across the Gwai to search for tracks along its eastern bank and the PATU sticks were dispatched to cover the wider areas. The lack of success led the SB to cease issuing daily intelligence appreciations.

On 27 July Gibson Moyo of C Section surrendered to the army engineers and BSAP excavating the cave at the airstrike site. He had been living in a cave for six days. An AK and an SKS were found nearby, as was a dead cadre. In the late afternoon fresh spoor of three men was found. Convinced that the survivors were still on the peninsula or had returned to Zambia, the JOC ordered the searches to continue and asked for sky-shouting aircraft for the night of 28–29 July. On Sunday, 28 July, the troops found the body of Julian Goniwe, the medical orderly of B Section. The score was five killed and 13 captured.

There was success on Monday, 29 July when the troops captured James Paratena, Cleophas Sibanda, the commander, and Bright Kumalo of A Section as well as Mutonga Maduma, deputy commander of B Section, and Joel Nkala, the medical orderly of C Section. Two of them were wounded and all were hungry, having been without food for ten days. They offered no resistance. Three AK rifles, two pistols and ammunition and some South African currency were recovered. This left two political commissars outstanding: Litson Ncube of A Section and Musa Male (alias Moyo) of B Section.

Paratena said nothing of further crossings but claimed that 15 ZAPU sections had been kitted out at Kaluwa camp in Lusaka at the same time as his. Six of

these had been accounted for during operations Griffin and Mansion. He did not know the destination, infiltration dates or crossing points of other sections.

With two cadres outstanding who had not been seen by the captured men since the airstrike on 20 July, the JOC withdrew troops, leaving one platoon manning the stop line and two platoons near the rivers where the missing men were likely to be found. The JOC proposed to disband on 31 July when the BSAP Support Unit was due to take over from the army.

On Tuesday, 30 July the troop withdrawal began to Msuna and the RRAF aircraft flew out of Wankie. One of the captured men showed where he had hidden two RPD machine guns, ammunition and packs filled with explosives.

The JOC closed at 1000 hours on 31 July with the score at five killed, 18 captured and two outstanding. Five days later, to the west of the peninsula, the BSAP arrested Musa Moyo after a local African had betrayed his whereabouts. Later a South African helicopter crew found four rusty loaded AK magazines, detonators and the skeleton of Davidson Mpofu, the missing deputy commander of the ZAPU platoon.

Operations Griffin and Mansion were cited as reasons by Lardner-Burke for the three-monthly renewal of the state of emergency. He added a warning to the African nationalists in Lusaka that if they crossed into Rhodesia they would be destroyed. His warning was reinforced on 25 July by the annual report of the commissioner of police, James Spink, who warned against minimizing the dangers that Rhodesia faced from terrorist infiltrators because they had more sophisticated tactics and were well armed.

Earlier, on Monday, 22 July, interrogation of men captured on Operation Mansion had yielded information of another incursion in the Feira area where the Zambezi flows into Mozambique. The information was not verified but the captured men had said that the selling of personal items by their companions at Kaluwa camp, Lusaka, had been a sure sign of an imminent operation. Then at 0915 hours on 25 July the BBC stated that the current incursion was a two-pronged attack to disperse the Rhodesian security forces and that three ZAPU terrorist training camps existed in Rhodesia.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN:

OPERATION EXCESS, JULY–AUGUST 1968

The next day, Friday, 26 July, an Internal Affairs patrol found a figure-of-8 bootprint five kilometres northeast of the Mwanja river in the Chewore safari area. Casting around, the southeasterly tracks of 30 men were discovered and followed. After five kilometres the trackers found a camp evacuated five days previously.

The Rhodesian security forces responded by establishing JOC Excess at Makuti at 0600 hours on Saturday, 27 July. Lieutenant John Desfountain's troop of Support Group 1RLI, led by African trackers, took up the pursuit. The JOC moved to Karoi the next morning, Sunday, 28 July where 2 Commando joined it. Major Robert Southey of 3 Commando set up his tactical headquarters at a roads department camp at the Angwa river bridge, 50 kilometres south of Kanyemba. E Company 1RAR formed a stop line west of the Mwanja river. A troop of the BSAP Support Unit and six PATU sticks were deployed into the Chewore area. Hunyani mission on the Mozambican border was placed under BSAP guard and surveillance. The JOC was allocated three helicopters, two Provosts and two Trojans. The helicopters based themselves at Kanyemba while the Provosts and Trojans joined them during the day but returned to Karoi at night.

While resupplying Desfountain with food and water and ferrying in reinforcements, Second Lieutenant Peter Mincher's 7 Troop 2 Commando, Flight Lieutenant Peter Petter-Bowyer spotted a clump of green trees in the distance to the southeast, ahead on the line of tracks. In the otherwise grey, leafless bush of the dry season, green trees indicated the presence of water and Petter-Bowyer deduced that the ZAPU platoon would have gone that way. He persuaded Desfountain and JOC Excess to allow him to fly Mincher and two trackers to examine the trees. With the permission of JOC Excess, he

did so and the spoor was duly found. He then brought Desfountain and the rest of the force forward to Mincher. Returning to Angwa bridge to refuel, he persuaded majors Robert Southey and John Hickman, the 1RLI second in command, to allow him to fly the trackers forward on a second bound. This bound reduced the age of the tracks to 36 hours. Another bound to the dry Mwanzamtanda river brought it down to 24 hours. A further bound uncovered a deserted camp by a pool among trees in a tributary of the river farther to the southeast. Its still smouldering fires, abandoned bashas, all-round defensive sangars, a dropped slab of Soviet TNT and wet splash marks on the bank told Mincher and Desfountain that contact was imminent.

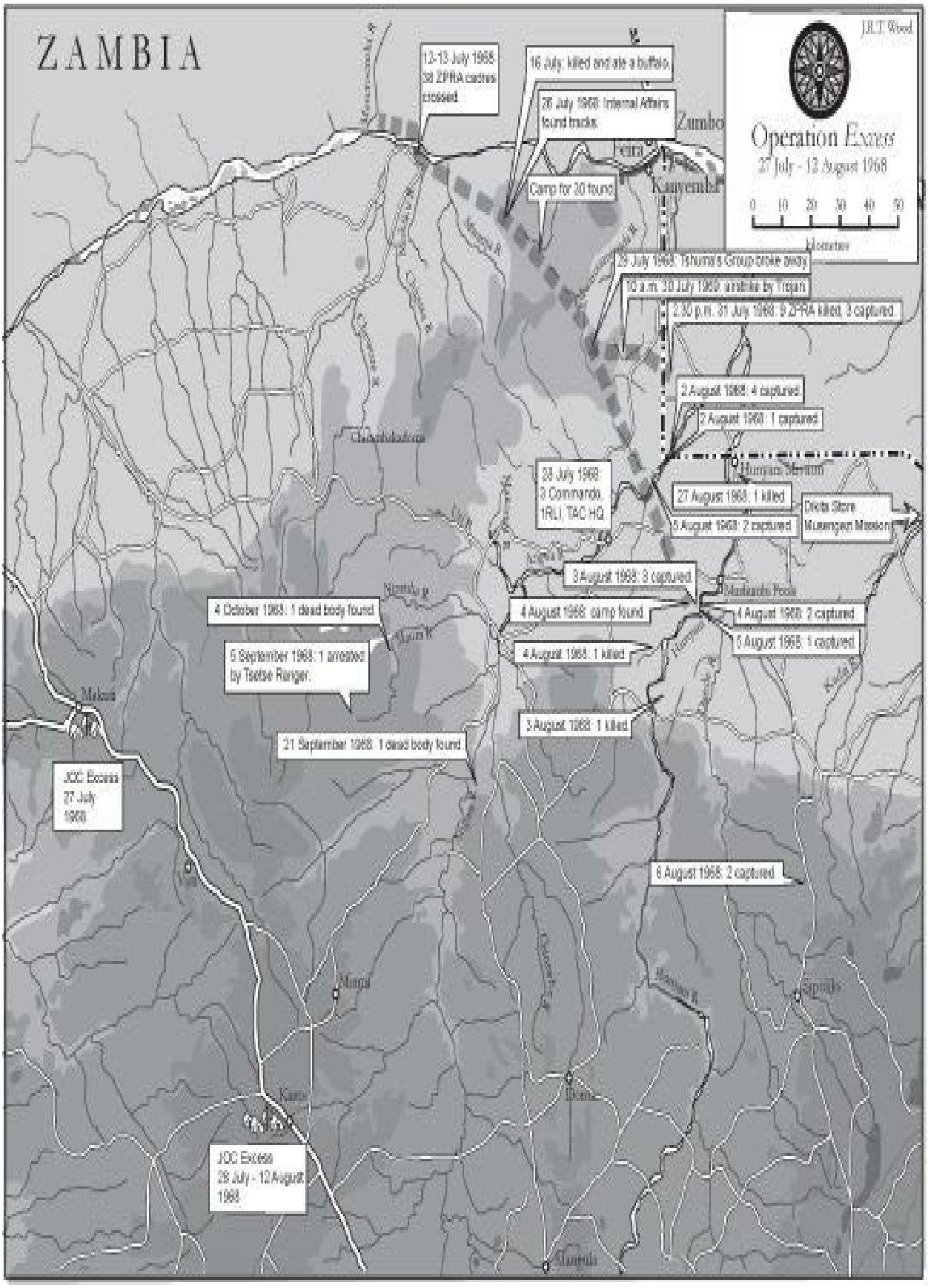
They were right because, having just shot a buffalo, the ZAPU platoon had been preparing a meal before their night march when the sound of the approaching helicopters prompted their retreat. Mincher and Desfountain advanced three kilometres to mount a night ambush. During the night, watched by Colour Sergeant Lou Hallamore, a ZAPU section approached the ambush but then retreated, brushing out their tracks.

To contain the ZAPU platoon, JOC Excess had E Company 1RAR form a stop line between Cauldron's camps 3 and 4 and deployed elements of the BSAP ground coverage north of Doma and into the Dande Tribal Trust Land, ahead of the ZAPU line of march.

There was welcome news in the offing because that Sunday night, 28 July, the hunt for the ZAPU commander, Moffat Hadebe of Gwanda, and his companion, John Mandivengerayi (alias John Zwandanda), ended. The two men arrived in the evening at Chipera's kraal in Mozambique, close to the Zambezi and 13 kilometres downstream from Vila Zumbo, the Portuguese administrative post across the Luangwa confluence from Zambia and diagonally opposite Kanyemba in Rhodesia.

Hadebe was dressed in civilian clothing while Mandivengerayi was still wearing his ZAPU khaki combat jacket, khaki shirt and blue shorts. Having hidden their rifles and ammunition, they sought food and assistance from the kraal, expressing surprise to learn they were in Mozambique. They offered the villagers money to ferry them across the river to Zambia. The villagers agreed but said it was not safe for the moment to attempt to paddle upstream to Zambia. Instead, with their agreement, a boatman took them to an island in

the Zambezi as a first step to Zambia. The boatman then paddled across to Zumbo to report their presence at 2300 hours to the chef de post, Señor Homem. Homem armed three members of his civil police and landed them on either end of the island with instructions to search it on the pretext of hunting for hippo. Hadebe and Mandivengerayi attempted to fire a pistol at them but it misfired and they were arrested. The police stripped them of a second loaded pistol with a broken feeder spring and jammed with dirt, a charged pistol magazine, 54 7.65mm rounds, two Nkomo badges and took from Hadebe £1,165/16/3 in a knotted ZAPU vest. On instructions from his superiors in Tete, Homem retained the money before handing the two prisoners to Major Leon Jacobs and RLI RSM Robin Tarr whom he summoned from Kanyemba.


ZAMBIA
J.R.T. Wood
Operation Exacs
27 July - 12 August 1968
0 10 20 30 40 50
Kilometres
12-13 July 1968: 38 ZPRA cadres crossed
16 July: killed and ate a buffalo
26 July 1968: Internal Affairs found tracks
Camp for 30 found
29 July 1968: Tshuma's Group broke away
10 a.m. 30 July 1968: airstrike by Trojan
2.30 p.m. 31 July 1968: 9 ZPRA killed, 3 captured
2 August 1968: 4 captured
2 August 1968: 1 captured
28 July 1968: 3 Commando, 1RLI, TAC HQ
27 August 1968: 1 killed
5 August 1968: 2 captured
Dhola Store
Mtuengwe Mission
3 August 1968: 3 captured
4 August 1968: camp found
4 August 1968: 1 killed
4 August 1968: 2 captured
6 August 1968: 1 captured
4 October 1968: 1 dead body found
6 September 1968: 1 arrested by Tsetse Ranger.
21 September 1968: 1 dead body found
3 August 1968: 1 killed
JCC Excess 27 July 1968
6 August 1968: 2 captured
JCC Excess 28 July - 12 August 1968
Kamativi
Mlibizi
Binga
Dema
Mlibizi

Peter Petter-Bowyer recalls the disappointment he and the RLI troops felt when the man they had hunted since 20 March 1968 turned out to be a thin, nondescript man of medium height.[10] On 31 July, Hadebe and Mandivengerayi showed Detective Inspector Johne Fletcher where they had hidden two AK rifles, two primed grenades and four loaded AK magazines containing 102 7.62mm rounds. The two men were then flown to Salisbury and would receive long prison sentences. Hadebe was only released in 1980 after the accession of Mugabe. Fletcher asked for a reward to be paid to the Mozambican villagers and for the Rhodesian government to write a letter of commendation to Homem.

At dawn on Monday, 29 July the RLI tracking teams on Operation Excess followed the six-hour-old spoor southeastward into the Dande safari area, finding a canvas water bottle container, a rifle cleaning kit and a 7.62mm round in the dry upper reaches of the Mwanzamtanda river, 30 kilometres south of Kanyemba. Ahead of them, the ZAPU men were resting after their night march when Peter Petter-Bowyer landed his helicopter 500 metres away to check for tracks. The ZAPU cadres scattered in panic. The seven men of E Section, led by Moses Tshuma, a Cuban-trained Cauldron veteran, ran southward down a riverbed and headed for the Mount Darwin district, the platoon's original objective. The other ZAPU sections regrouped after the helicopter took off and divided into two groups. Daniel Makoni sent one group to the Musengezi and Mukumvura rivers, 120 kilometres away where he expected to buy food at the Dikita store, close to the Mozambican border and 12 kilometres north of the Musengezi mission. The second group would head south and then swing east toward the same area. Ultimately they still intended to climb the Zambezi escarpment to reach Mount Darwin.

At 1900 hours Davidson Mutsinze led the 16 men of the A and D sections southward while Daniel Makoni and the 15 men of B and C sections resumed the southeasterly march. Before then, at dusk, the RLI tracking teams had reached a point three kilometres south of the Mtemba range of hills, ten kilometres from the Mozambican border. Major Southey deployed three troops in a stop line ahead of the line of march. In addition, he sent Second Lieutenant Pearce's 13 Troop 3 Commando to backtrack toward the crossing

point on the Zambezi, while Support Group 1RLI covered the Zambezi's bank. He supported the tracking effort with aerial reconnaissance by Provost and Trojan aircraft flying from Kanyemba.

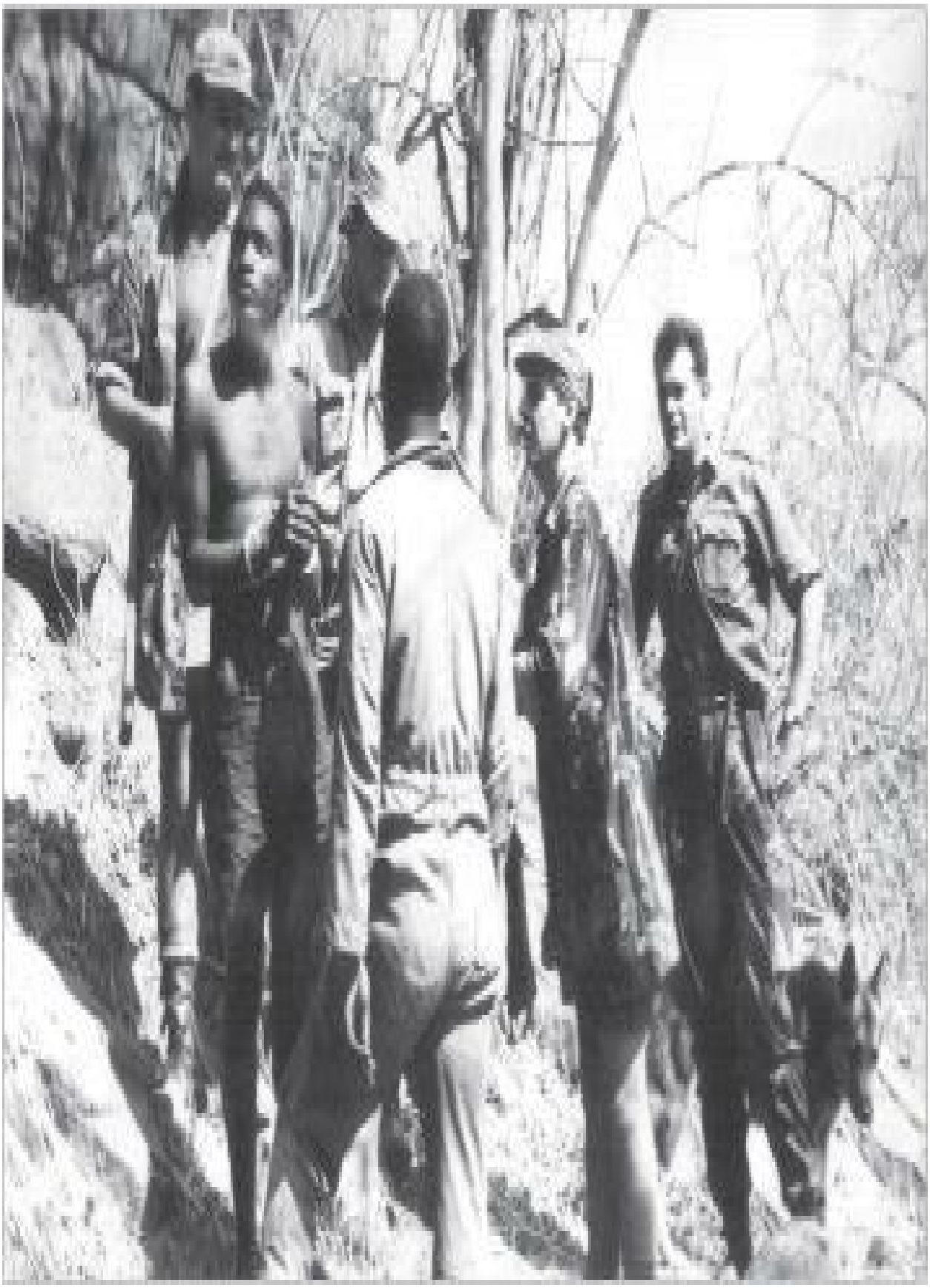
On Tuesday, 30 July Desfountain's men were pursuing six-hour-old spoor south of the Mtemba range. At 1000 hours the enemy was close enough for him to call for a Trojan airstrike on a suspected position on the lip of a ravine. Acting as a forward air controller, Petter-Bowyer instructed Flying Officer Chris Weinmann to follow the shadow of his helicopter. Weinmann's accurate strike by 37mm rockets was fruitless because Daniel Makoni's 15 men were resting on another hill 1,600 metres away watching it. The pursuit continued all day to the Kanyemba road, 13 kilometres from the Mozambican border. As dusk fell, the tracks were assessed as an hour old.

As 2 Commando moved to block off the Mozambican border, diplomatic clearance was secured for a crossing into Mozambique. Southey replaced the exhausted tracking teams with 12 and 14 troops. Desfountain's men were withdrawn and Mincher's placed in a blocking position.

The follow-up resumed at dawn on Wednesday, 31 July. At 0700 hours, beyond the Kanyemba road, Jeremy Strong's 12 Troop found a resting place, containing an AK magazine and discarded animal bones. The tracks headed east toward the Mozambican border seven kilometres away. JOC Excess placed stop groups ahead and moved 1 Commando to Sipolilo while Support Group 1RLI continued to cover the Zambezi at Kanyemba and E Company 1RAR was held in reserve at Makuti. 13 Troop continued backtracking to the crossing point.

Three kilometres inside Mozambique, on reaching a gully on the edge of the dry bed of the Kamatasa river at 1430 hours, Strong heard voices and then spotted 15 men by an anthill in the trees on the opposite bank, some 40 metres away. He positioned an MAG gunner to cover his troops as they skirmished forward in a flanking attack. The heavy and effective ZAPU response, however, forced Strong and his men into cover. MAG fire from Petter-Bowyer's technician, Corporal Alan Aird, and white smoke from a phosphorus grenade allowed Strong to storm the ZAPU position, finding seven dead and one wounded. An advance down the gully drew fire from two men who were then wounded and captured.

Petter-Bowyer flew ahead with Aird shooting and wounding one man and mortally wounding another, before they could fire on the advancing troops. The pair retreated into a tunnel formed by tree roots in the eroded bank. Corporal Lahee and Trooper Cooper arrived to throw grenades into the tunnel, inducing the surviving cadre to surrender. Petter-Bowyer and Aird trapped another man in a further set of roots but ran out of ammunition. The second Alouette killed him with a burst fired by Butch Phillips, Flying Officer Tudor Thomas's gunner. The troops found the body. The dead were identified as the commander, Daniel Makoni and the political commissar, Thomson Chitsunge, along with cadres, Jeremiah Kanambiri, Steven Gwatideo, Comrade Kureva, Saul Mhlanga, Algerian-trained Goodrich Kahiya (alias Coca-Cola or Zephania Chinongo) of B Section, Martin Dube and Zache Choga. 12 and 14 troops set off in pursuit of three ZAPU survivors while Petter-Bowyer flew the three wounded men, including the deputy commander, Snap Manengoni (alias Mutero), to the SB at Kanyemba.



Special Branch takes delivery of a terrorist captured by RAR troops. Photo Masodja

A Trojan gets airborne over a pair of Provosts on standby, armed with frantan (napalm).

Petter-Bowyer flew back to collect Second Lieutenant S.J. Coetzee and five men from 2 Commando to reinforce Strong in the follow-up. On landing, Petter-Bowyer saw an armed man in front of him among the trees. He pointed him out to Coetzee who did not react as he was distracted by firing to the right. Later, when captured by Mozambican locals on 3 August, the insurgent would tell Petter-Bowyer that he had taken cover 75 metres away in an antbear hole and had kept him in his sights and would have killed him if discovered. The RRAF circulated this story among its crews to improve their operational awareness and efficiency.

The captured men were flown to point out where Daniel Makoni had split up the ZAPU platoon on 29 July. While Portuguese forces patrolled the border, JOC Excess deployed 1 Commando to the resting place found by the Kanyemba road. From there 4 Troop 1 Commando followed the spoor of the 16 men of A and D sections whom Davidson Mutsinze had led south on 29 July. Casting around just east of the Kanyemba road, Second Lieutenant Michael F. Graham's 1 Troop 1 Commando spotted the tracks of three others heading northwest toward the crossing point on the Zambezi.

JOC Excess had 2 Commando set up its headquarters four kilometres east of Mashumbi Pools with its troops in stop groups along Hunyani river north and south of the border. Major Southey and his 3 Commando remained at Angwa bridge, Support Group 1RLI at Kanyemba and E Company 1RAR at Makuti. From the captured men, JOC Excess finally learned the size of the platoon, its intentions and its history. One interesting detail in a dead man's pocket was the name and address of Felix Madzira, an employee of the Venetian Blinds Company, Salisbury. His name and details had also been found on a document picked up on Operation Griffin.

At 2100 hours on Thursday, 1 August Israel Kandame, Wilbert Manyangani and Titos Sibanda of A and D sections were given six hours to secure and

return with fresh food from nearby kraals. The next morning, 2 August, however, the local inhabitants betrayed the three to Section Officer Keith Douche and his B Troop of the BSAP Support Unit who arrested them at Bunu store a kilometre west of the Angwa river and four kilometres south of the Mozambican border. Having admitted A and D sections were close by, the captives guided Douche, Detective McCaskill and Graham's 1 Troop 1 Commando to their camp. They misled their captors and it was 1600 hours before the camp was found on a low ridge clad in thick jesse bush close to the eastern bank of the Manyima river, seven kilometres north of the Angwa bridge. 1 Troop drew heavy rifle and machine-gun fire and had difficulty in responding because of defective ammunition. Phosphorus grenades bounced off the jesse bush and set it alight, allowing the ZAPU men to escape with Graham in pursuit.

An RRAF Alouette casevacs a wounded Rhodesian soldier.

2 Commando RLI troops pose on the Zambezi. From left: unknown visitor, unknown senior National Parks ranger, Lance-Corporal ‘Bundu’ Peters, Trooper Smith, Lance-Corporal Ward, Warrant Officer II Lou Hallamore and the boatman.

Earlier on Friday, 2 August four cadres were captured in Mozambique close to the confluence of the Kamsaza and Angwa rivers. To the south, within Rhodesia, on a road six kilometres east of the Angwa river, Patrol Officer Anthony Simpson’s section of B Troop BSAP Support Unit arrested Zinowanda Takura of Daniel Makoni’s group. JOC Excess arranged for the captured men to point out their crossing point on the Zambezi. It deployed troops to ambush the Dikita store. 1 Commando would continue their follow-up and to search the contact area. 2 Commando would remain in its position. 3 Commando would be at Angwa bridge but would detach a troop to cover the road where Simpson had made his arrest. The JOC was still at Karoi, Support Group at Kanyemba and E Company 1RAR at Makuti. Surrender leaflets were dropped in the contact areas. The score was nine killed and seven captured.

The tracking continued on Sunday, 3 August. A captured man indicated a crossing point six kilometres east of the Chewore river. What was worrying was that fresh tracks of four men with figure-of-8 soles were found there along with Soviet wrapping paper and a length of trip wire for a POMZ landmine.

On Monday, 4 August, near the confluence of the Morowando and Hunyani rivers, Lieutenant Coetzee and eight men of 2 Commando exchanged fire with five members of ZAPU’s E Section. Bicycle tracks indicated that they had received local help.

At 1330 hours, close to Mashumbi Pools, the BSAP ground coverage arrested Koti Joseph Chapepa and Lloyd Musarurwa, two of the fugitives from Coetzee’s contact. Fresh spoor was followed southward. Tracks of two men were being followed near the crossing point on the Zambezi. Half an hour

previously, just east of the Hunyani river and two kilometres southwest of St Cecilia's mission, Dick Golima (alias Ngorima or Davidson Sithole), commander of D Section and a veteran of Operation Isotope II, was killed by Patrol Officer Gray's PATU stick from Sipolilo. The spoor led 12 kilometres west to a camp for seven men.

JOC Excess sent 1 Commando to the Angwa river bridge with troops deployed between the Angwa bridge and Mashumbi Pools. 2 and 3 commandos were at Mashumbi Pools with troops along the Hunyani from Hunyani mission to the escarpment. A Company 1RRR was deployed to Musengezi mission with platoons at Dikita store to the north and to the south at the confluence of the Utete and Musengezi rivers. Support Group 1RLI remained at Kanyemba covering the Mwanja river. B Company 1RRR was at the bridge at hunting camp No. 16 next to the Kachowe river. 1RLI and 1RRR battalion headquarters were at Karoi with the JOC. The JOC intended to continue the tracking of stragglers and deployment of troops in depth between the Sapi and Mkanga rivers.

After an all-night ambush on 4–5 August, two sections of B Troop BSAP Support Unit, led by Lance Section Officer Rae and Patrol Officer Simpson, tracked and captured two E Section members, Ernest Mudyuri and Mkalalwa Mpala, on the road west of the Hunyani river and six kilometres north of St Cecilia's mission. Samson Dube of D Section and Edward Nkomo of A Section were caught on the western bank of the Angwa, three kilometres southwest of the Mozambican border. Two kilometres north of the border on the eastern bank of the Angwa, Robson Nyadire and Phillip Nyika of C Section (the two outstanding survivors of the contact with Southey's troops on 31 July) were captured by locals and handed to Portuguese troops who took them to Zumbo. The score was ten killed, nine captured and 19 outstanding.

On Tuesday, 6 August, after the African attendant at the Mahuti fly gate had telephoned the BSAP at Sipolilo to expect them, Moses Tshuma, the E Section leader and Cauldron survivor, and Joey Mudyuri from Chipinga and also of E Section, were arrested at a Police Reserve roadblock on the main road, 16 kilometres north of Sipolilo. The score was 25, with ten killed, 15 captured and eleven unaccounted for.

JOC Excess kept 1 Commando at Mashumbi Pools. B Company 1RRR deployed its platoons along the game fence either side of the main Chirundu road. Support Group 1RLI was withdrawn to Salisbury on Wednesday, 7 August with 2 Commando replacing them at Kanyemba. The searches continued, finding a Soviet-made pencil three kilometres south of the Zambezi. The ZAPU platoon was deemed smashed as a fighting force and no longer a threat.

On 8 August 3 Commando and RLI headquarters returned to Salisbury. 1 Commando was patrolling in depth between the Sapi and Mkanga rivers. 2 Commando was covering the Zambezi from Kanyemba. A Company 1RRR remained at Musengezi mission, patrolling between the Musengezi and Hunyani rivers. B Company 1RRR remained at Makuti, covering the escarpment. BSAP ground coverage and Rolice Reserve patrols were increased in the Sipolilo farming areas. An SAP helicopter was positioned at Kanyemba police station and an RRAF one at Kanyemba airfield, three kilometres to the south.

On Thursday, 9 August, while looking for a new site for a base camp near the Manyima river bridge, seven kilometres north of the Angwa bridge, Lieutenant W.M. Thompson and Trooper Russell Phillips of 8 Troop 2 Commando noticed an African watching them from the bush. When he reached down for his weapon they fired but he escaped. Five kilometres south of the Angwa bridge tracks were found but soon lost. A report of the theft of maize near the confluence of the Manyima and Angwa rivers led to the discovery of southbound tracks of two men wearing telltale figure-of-8 soles. They were followed but lost. A and B companies 1RRR were relieved by C and D companies 1RRR. BSAP Support Unit was deployed to Sipolilo to patrol the escarpment. The departure of the two Provosts to RRAF Thornhill was delayed in case they were needed to support the sightings and tracking near the Angwa. The closure of the JOC was also delayed by 24 hours but the SB ceased issuing daily intelligence reports. A patrol at the Chewore river mouth found two badly rusted AK magazines, a groundsheet, a rucksack eaten by termites, a sugar wrapper and an empty tin, but attributed them to Operation Cauldron.

On Sunday, 11 August the spoor of two men was found at the Angwa bridge

but 1 and 3 commandos were withdrawn to Salisbury, as was the RLI battalion headquarters. C Company 1RRR moved to Kanyemba with platoons at Mashumbi Pools, H hunting camp on the Zambezi and at the Angwa bridge. D Company continued to patrol the escarpment from Makuti. As the eleven outstanding ZAPU cadres were deemed to be intent only on securing food before retreating to Zambia, it was recommended that JOC Excess close at noon the next day and that a police exercise be mounted in the Kanyemba–Sipolilo–Mazoe valley areas.

At 1200 hours on Monday, 12 August JOC Excess duly closed, leaving D Company 1RAR at Makuti and C Company 1RRR at Kanyemba. The BSAP were charged with locating the outstanding terrorists. One survivor was shot dead near Hunyani mission on Tuesday, 27 August after having been betrayed by a local African to Corporal Croukamp's patrol from 13 Troop 3 Commando. On 5 September a tsetse-fly-control ranger captured a ZAPU cadre and handed him to the SAS just north of Matsikiti in the escarpment region of the Chewore safari area. On 21 September the body of a ZAPU cadre was found near the Angwa river, five kilometres south of Dean's camp. A further body was found on 4 October by a BSAP patrol also in the escarpment north of Matsikiti. In mid-November weapons and ammunition were found in the same vicinity.

Operation Excess added to Rhodesia's growing collection of Warsaw Pact weapons and equipment: a Walther and a Cask pistol, 12 AK and four SKS rifles, 47 AK magazines, two RPD machine guns, one RPD magazine, 6,426 7.62mm rounds, 35 grenades, three landmines, one RPG rocket launcher and four rockets, 18 detonators, 63 200-gram and eleven 400-gram slabs of TNT, 12 feet of white safety fuse and 32 feet of black safety fuse.

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10 Petter-Bowyer, p. 184.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN:

OPERATION GRAVEL, AUGUST 1968

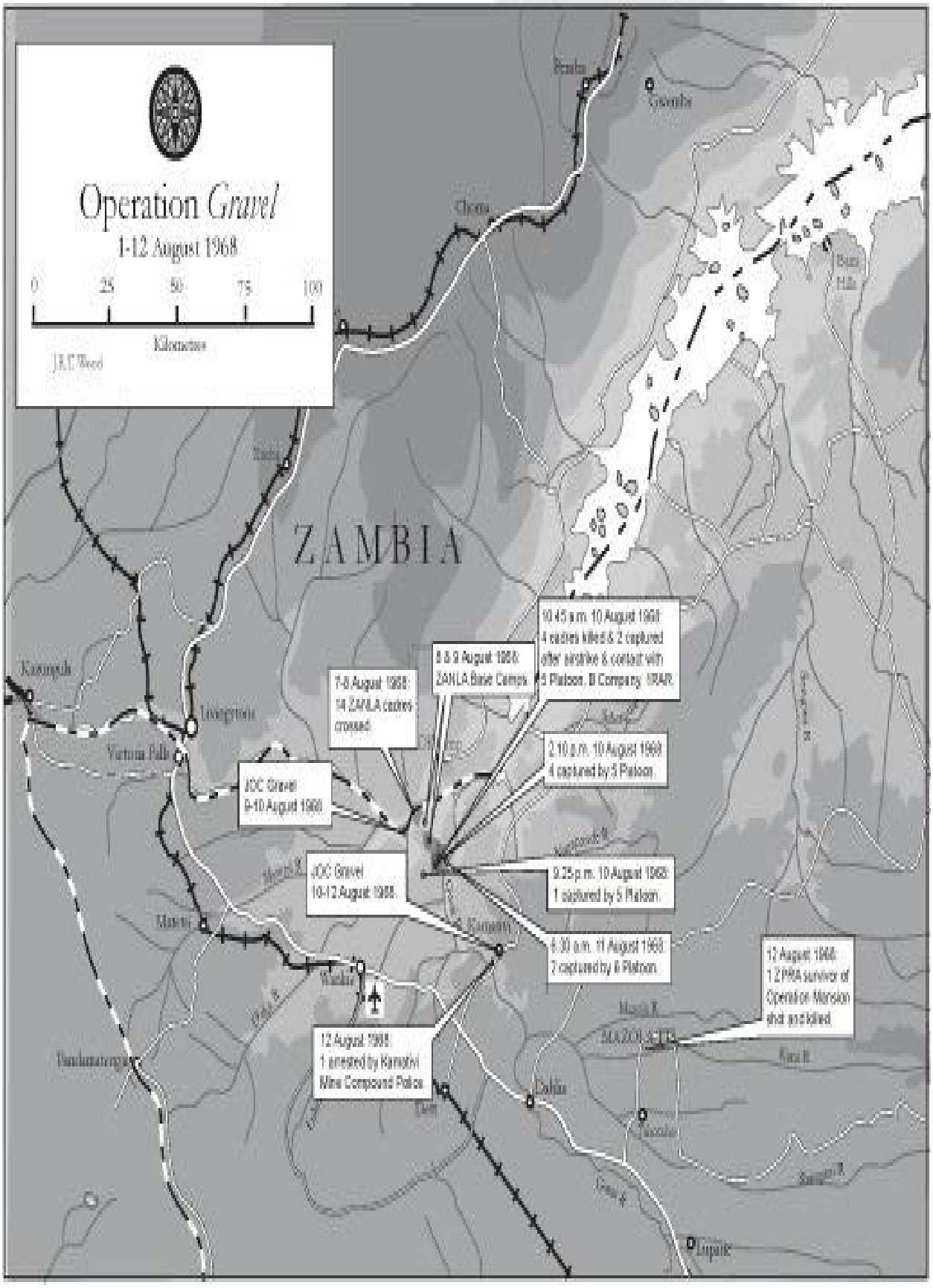
Again, while the Rhodesians were seeking out the survivors of the three ZAPU incursions, Noel Mukono of ZANU had decided yet again to insert a team into Rhodesia. It was clear, however, that he did not know the fate of his previous groups.

He chose the 14-man Gukurahundu group,[11] comprising six who had trained in Cuba, three in China and five at the Itumbi Reefs camp in Tanzania. Commanded by Rex Makosa, they were variously armed with Soviet PPSH and French MAT sub-machine guns, two RPD machine guns, four AK-47 and five SKS rifles, grenades, mines and explosives. They were issued a map, propaganda pamphlets, green shirts and £30 each. Makosa received £60. They were instructed to link up with previous infiltrators who were believed to be near Gokwe and to subvert the area before doing likewise in Chipinga. They were given the names of ngangas (medicine/spiritual guides) in Gokwe and Chipinga who would give them protective medicine and guide them.

In accordance with ZANU custom, Mukono, Felix Rice, Josiah Tongogara and Bernard Mtumha escorted the Gukurahundu group to a crossing point on the Zambezi river east of the Deka river confluence near Mapeta island. There two press-ganged Zambian Batonka fishermen waited with two boats. The ferrying across, on the night of 7–8 August, was preceded by a prayer session accompanied by the sacrificial killing of a chicken to invoke the protection of their ancestors. This and their anti-tracking tactics, however, proved worthless because their spoor was found early on 9 August by 11 Platoon of Major David Heppenstall’s D Company 1RAR.

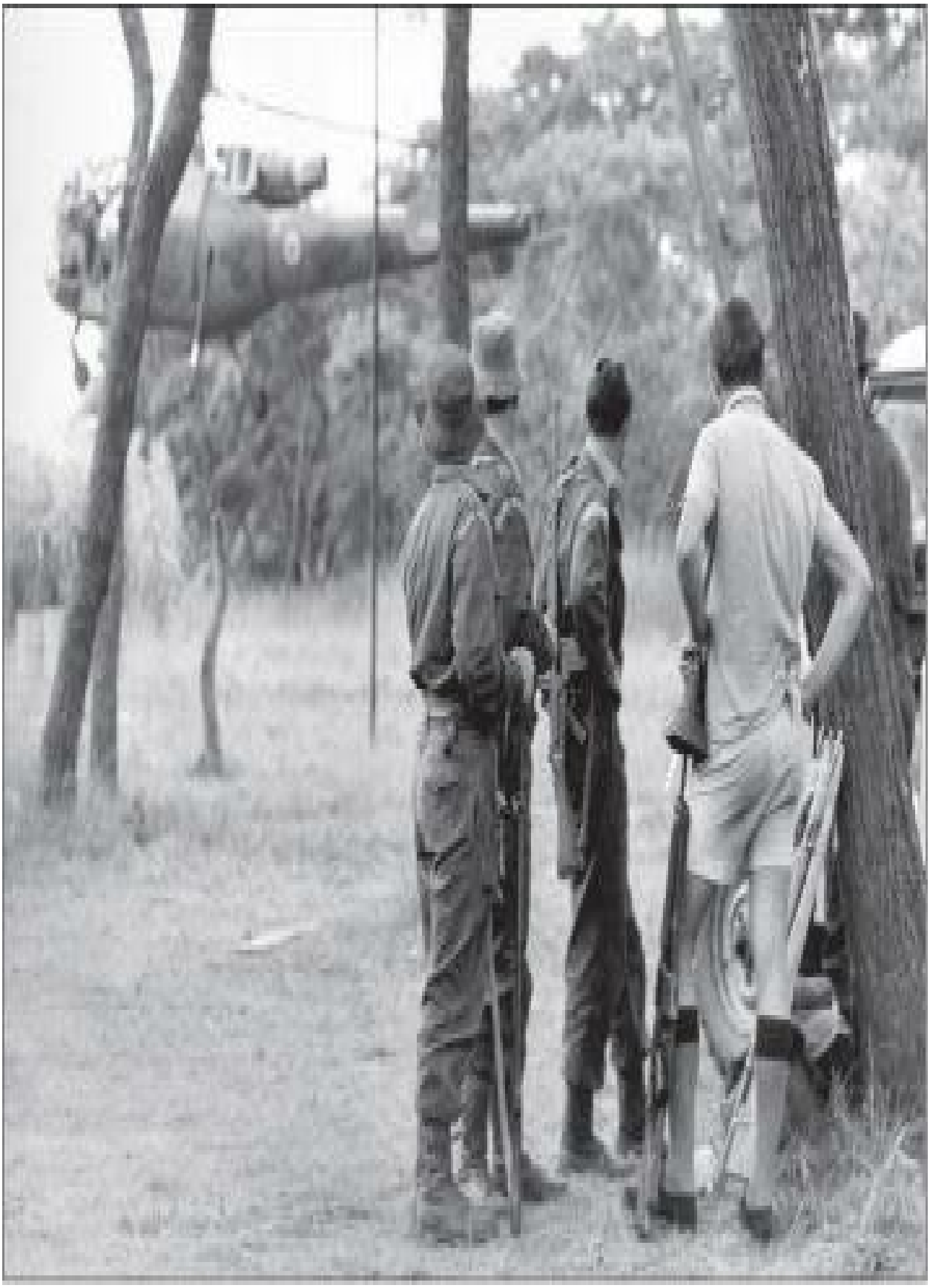
A JOC was set up for Operation Gravel at the Deka river confluence and was reinforced by 1RAR’s B, C and D companies and Mortar Platoon, SB

personnel, PATU sticks, two Trojans, two Provosts, an SAP Cessna 185, an RRAF Alouette and an SAP one. C Company took over the tracking and by the evening found an empty base camp on a large hill, 16 kilometres south of the Msuna–Zambezi confluence. At 1045 hours the next day, Saturday, 10 August, Lieutenant D.S. Drake's 5 Platoon B Company killed four ZANU men and captured three after an exchange of fire and 37mm rocket attacks by the Trojans. Fresh spoor was followed heading southeast near the Gwai river until last light. In the fighting one of two Zambian Batonka fishermen acting as porters escaped; the other was captured and returned to Zambia.


Operation Gravel
1-12 August 1968
0
25
50
75
100
Kilometres
J.R.T. Wood
ZAMBIA
Kazungula
Livingstone
Victoria Falls
Mamili
Sesheke
Kalabo
Lukulu
Mongu
Senanga
Lealui
Kaoma
Chavuma
Zambezi R.
Kwando R.
Chobe R.
Linyanti R.
Kwando R.
Kafue R.
Lusu R.
Luena R.
Lupale
7-8 August 1968:
14 ZAMLA cadres crossed
JOC Gravel
8-10 August 1968
JOC Gravel
10-12 August 1968
8 & 9 August 1968:
ZAMLA Base Camps
10.45 a.m. 10 August 1968
4 cadres killed & 2 captured after airstrike & contact with 5 Platoon, B Company 1RAR
2.10 p.m. 10 August 1968
4 captured by 5 Platoon
9.25 p.m. 10 August 1968
1 captured by 5 Platoon
8.30 a.m. 11 August 1968
7 captured by 6 Platoon
12 August 1968:
1 arrested by Kamativi Mine Compound Police
12 August 1968:
1 ZIPRA survivor of Operation Mansion shot and killed

Early on 11 August Lieutenant Robin Ford's 6 Platoon B Company captured three more ZANU fugitives. Impressive quantities of arms and ammunition were captured. Only the leader, Makosa, evaded capture but was arrested the next day by the compound police at Kamativi mine when seeking to buy food at the store.

Operation Gravel was declared over that day just as the ZAPU survivor of Operation Mansion threw his grenade at a BSAP sergeant on patrol in the Mazola Tribal Trust Land and was pursued and shot dead. Although shaken, ZANU issued from Lusaka defiant, false figures of the killing of Rhodesian troops and the destruction of more helicopters than Rhodesia possessed.



Police Reservists watch an Alouette getting airborne.

A captured terrorist, his weaponry and clothing. Photo Masodja

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11 Gukurahundu is a Shona word meaning literally, ‘The early rain which washes away the chaff before the spring rain’. It gained notoriety when it was used as title for the massacre of the Ndebele by Mugabe’s forces after 1980.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN:

ASSISTING THE PORTUGUESE: OPERATION TRIPPER

In the wake of the failure of talks with Harold Wilson on HMS Fearless at Gibraltar in October 1968 came a British refusal to discuss a settlement with Ian Smith. He responded by holding a successful referendum on a republican constitution in 1969. This meant severing any links with the British crown. The outraged British government remained powerless, however, to do more than to remove ‘royal’ titles from Rhodesian units and to continue to proclaim the illegality of any Rhodesian action.

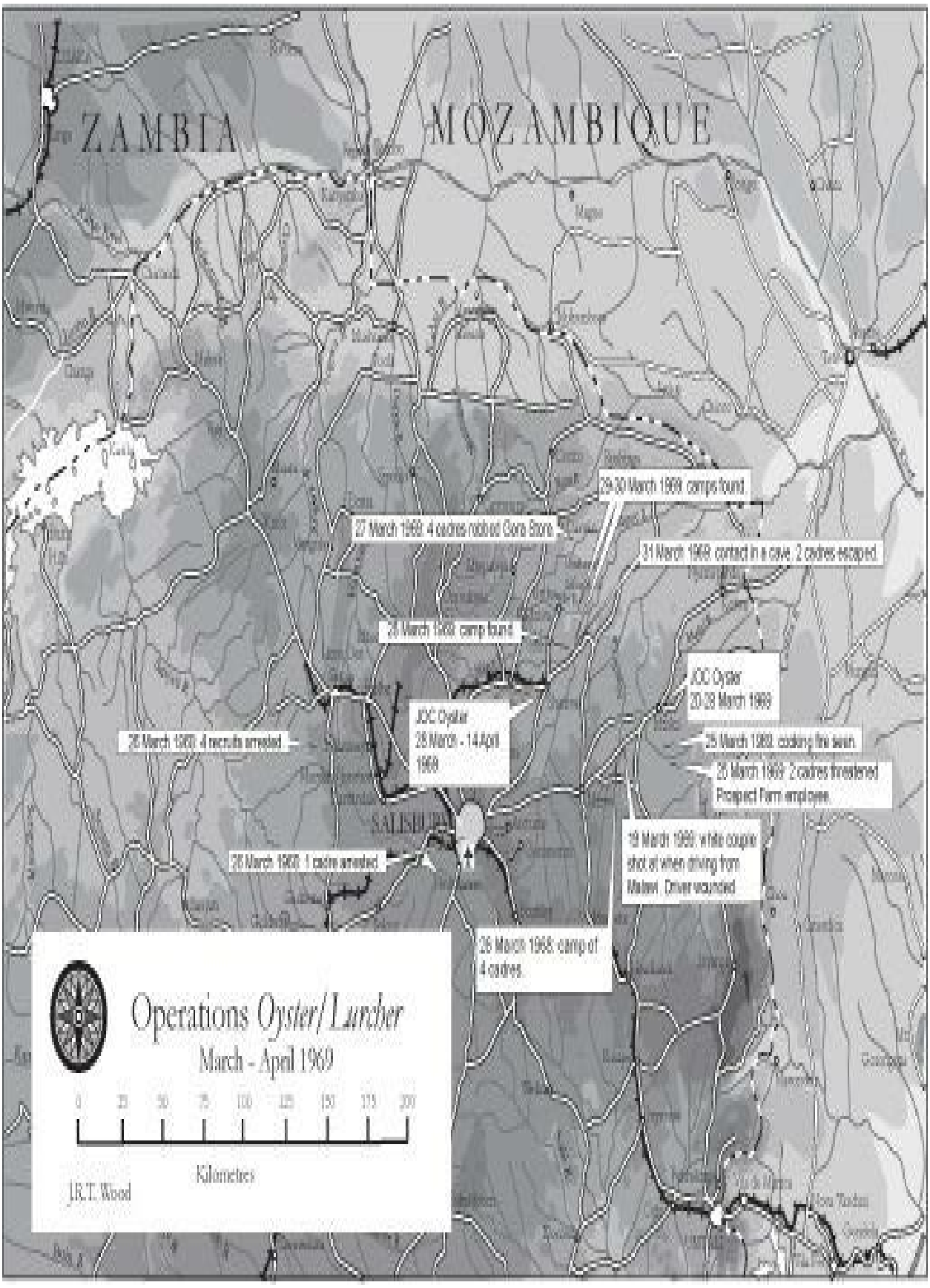
Coinciding with this lull in the settlement effort, ZAPU and ZANU pulled in their horns for the moment after their series of failed incursions. This left the Rhodesian military action confined to border patrols, supported by the RRAF. To remind the Zambians of its existence and to deter any crossings, the RRAF undertook periodic patrols along the Zambezi. When Canberra bombers were used, the pilots shut down one engine to conserve fuel and to extend engine life.

The absence of action, but their awareness of the vulnerability of their long northeastern border, led the Rhodesians to respond eagerly on 7 December 1968 to a Portuguese request for military assistance in combating the threat by Frelimo to their engineers constructing the US$315-million, 1.2-million-kilowatt hydroelectric dam in the Cabora Bassa gorge of the Zambezi river in the Tete province. Hitherto, Dr Eduardo Mondlane, the leader of Frelimo, had concentrated his 15,000 Forças Populares para o Libertaçåo de Moçambique (FPLM) fighters in the northern Mozambican provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado. Although hampered by Dr Banda denying Frelimo a safe haven in nearby Malawi from whence to attack Cabora Bassa, President Kaunda allowed them into Zambia while feigning ignorance of their presence. Frelimo found the Cabora Bassa dam threatening because, aside from

supplying Rhodesia and South Africa with cheap electrical power, it was intended to create opportunities for an influx of Portuguese settlers. Frelimo, like ZAPU and ZANU, was also anxious to justify the support given it by the International Conference of Solidarity in Khartoum and, of course, the OAU and their Eastern bloc allies. It was in Rhodesia's interest to neutralize Frelimo because the Shona-speaking subsistence farmers along Rhodesia's northeastern border shared kinship with families in Mozambique from whom they had been divided through the arbitrary drawing of borders by the Anglo-Portuguese Boundary Commission in 1892. These farmers were obviously a target for subversion.

Portuguese army briefing at Cancombe Tac HQ, Tete Province, Mozambique, December 1968. From left: Lieutenant-Colonel Silveira, Brigadier Monteiro, Major Rob Southey (1RLI), General dos Santos, Wing Commander Edwards (RRAF), the governor of Tete and Lieutenant Janz (interpreter).

A typical basha used by Frelimo insurgents, Tete Province, Mozambique.


ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE
29-30 March 1968: camps found
27 March 1968: 4 cadres robbed Cona Store
31 March 1968: contact in a cave, 2 cadres escaped
28 March 1968: camp found
JOC Oyster
20-28 March 1969
JOC Oyster
28 March - 14 April 1969
25 March 1968: cooking fire seen.
25 March 1968: 2 cadres threatened Prospect Farm employee.
28 March 1968: 4 recruits arrested
28 March 1968: 1 cadre arrested
*9 March 1968: white couple shot at when driving from Malawi. Driver wounded
26 March 1968: camp of 4 cadres.
Operations Oyster/Lurcher
March - April 1969
0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200
Kilometres
J.R.T. Wood

Mounting a second small and highly secret operation called Operation Tripper (under the overall codename Operation Natal), the OCC dispatched four Alouette III helicopters under command of Wing Commander Ken Edwards. The crews included Peter Petter-Bowyer and two future commanders of the air force, Norman Walsh and Hugh Slatter. They flew Rhodesian army advisers and combat-tracker units, including Captain Ron Reid-Daly, to Bene in the Tete province. This initial sortie on 7 December 1968 only lasted ten days but Operation Tripper would designate many future such deployments until 1971 when the Portuguese had acquired sufficient helicopters to handle operations on their own. This effort was supported by four Rhodesian Hunter jet fighters from 13 February 1969 but they flew only one sortie and did not use their weapons. What this initial Rhodesian foray proved was the need for a continuous presence of Rhodesian forces to deny ZANU and ZAPU the use of Tete province. The politics and economics of the hour, however, forbade the necessary military expansion to Rhodesia's cost, as she would learn on 23 December 1972 when an attack on Altena farm, Centenary, exposed the extent of the foothold ZANU had established in the African community in northeastern Rhodesia.

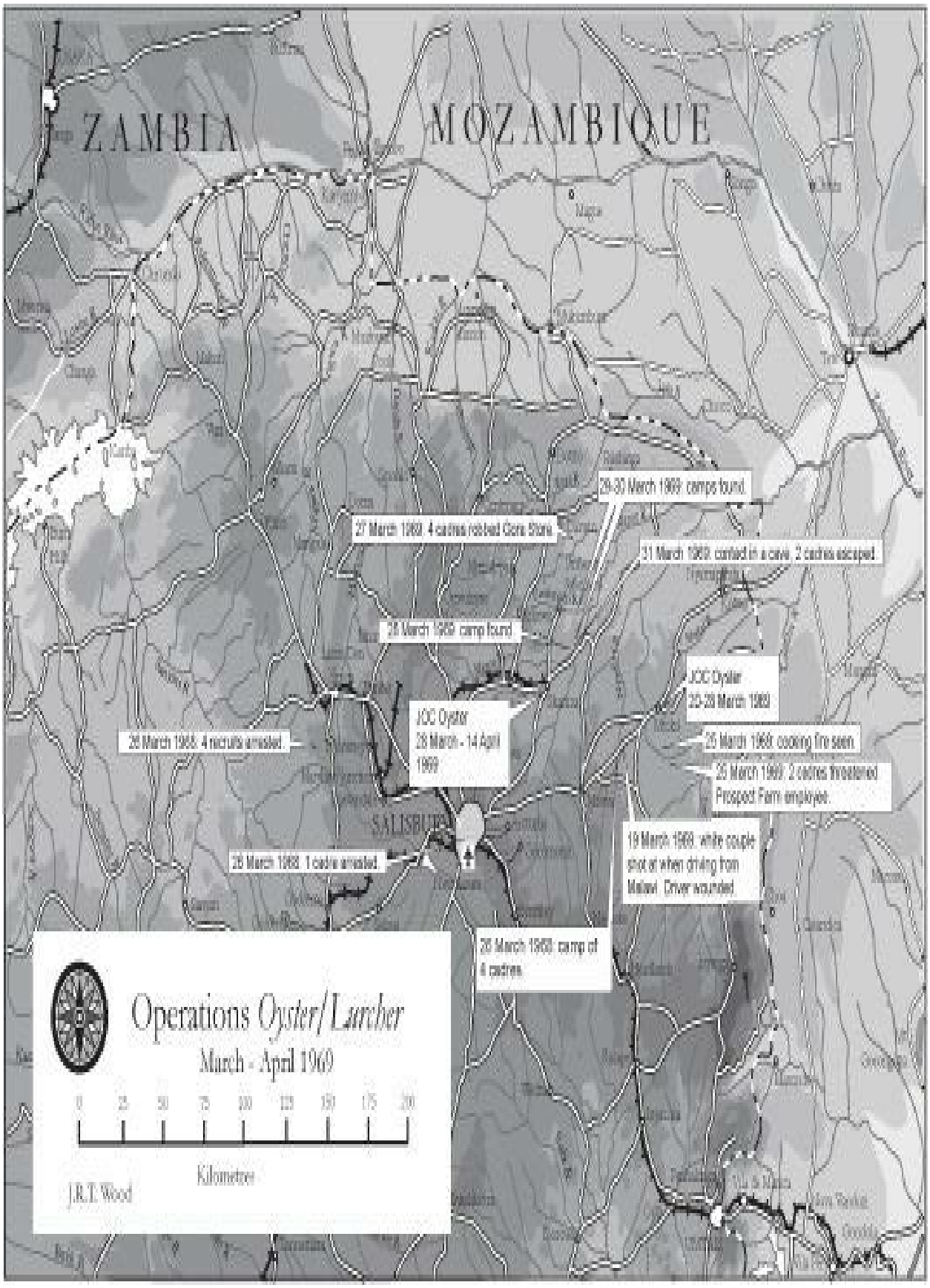
Mondelane was assassinated in Tanzania on 3 February 1969 by means of a parcel bomb, just after he had proclaimed that he would paralyze the construction of the Cabora Bassa dam despite its protective ring of 10,000 Portuguese troops. He had declared this on Wednesday, 22 January 1969, the eve of the award of the construction contract to an international consortium entitled ZAMCO and comprising French, West German and Swedish firms led by South Africa's Anglo-American Corporation. This was the second assassination of Frelimo leaders in Tanzania. Samuel Mutembo had been shot dead in the Mtwara region in late December 1968. These deaths promoted a flurry of speculation. The executive committee of Frelimo promoted its vice-president, Uria Simango, to president. In April 1969, however, Simango found himself in a triumvirate with two Marxist hardliners, Marcelino dos Santos and the FPLM commander, Samora Machel. Then in 1970 Frelimo expelled Simango and made dos Santos vice-president and Machel president. Machel would become Mozambique's first president in 1975. Initially, because of their mutual attachment to Moscow and the Comintern, Frelimo

offered to assist ZAPU to get to the unprotected Tete–Rhodesian border. ZAPU, however, did not take advantage of this, and it was ZANU and their Communist Chinese advisers who understood that it had been a mistake to confront the Rhodesian security forces in the unpopulated Zambezi valley. Reinvigorated by an influx of men into its camps in Zambia from training courses in China and Tanzania, ZANU took advantage of the cover of the disruption caused by Frelimo to send small teams to subvert the Rhodesian Shona-speaking border population. Crucially, ZANU planned to exploit the local beliefs in the powers of spirit mediums.

Later, in 1972–73, the Rhodesian security forces were accused of not understanding the new purpose of their opponents. This was not so, as evidence of the subversion in the northeast was beginning to appear in Rhodesian courts. In May 1969, after the weapons of two terrorists had been produced in court, three Africans were sentenced at Sinoia for “comforting, harbouring and assisting” two terrorists who had as yet eluded capture. In June 1969 an African was sentenced in Salisbury on similar charges, and a kraalhead appeared on charges of recruiting for a banned organization and training Africans in the use of arms. ZANU’s careful preparation for its campaign in the northeast would take time.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN:

OPERATIONS OYSTER AND LURCHER, MARCH–APRIL 1969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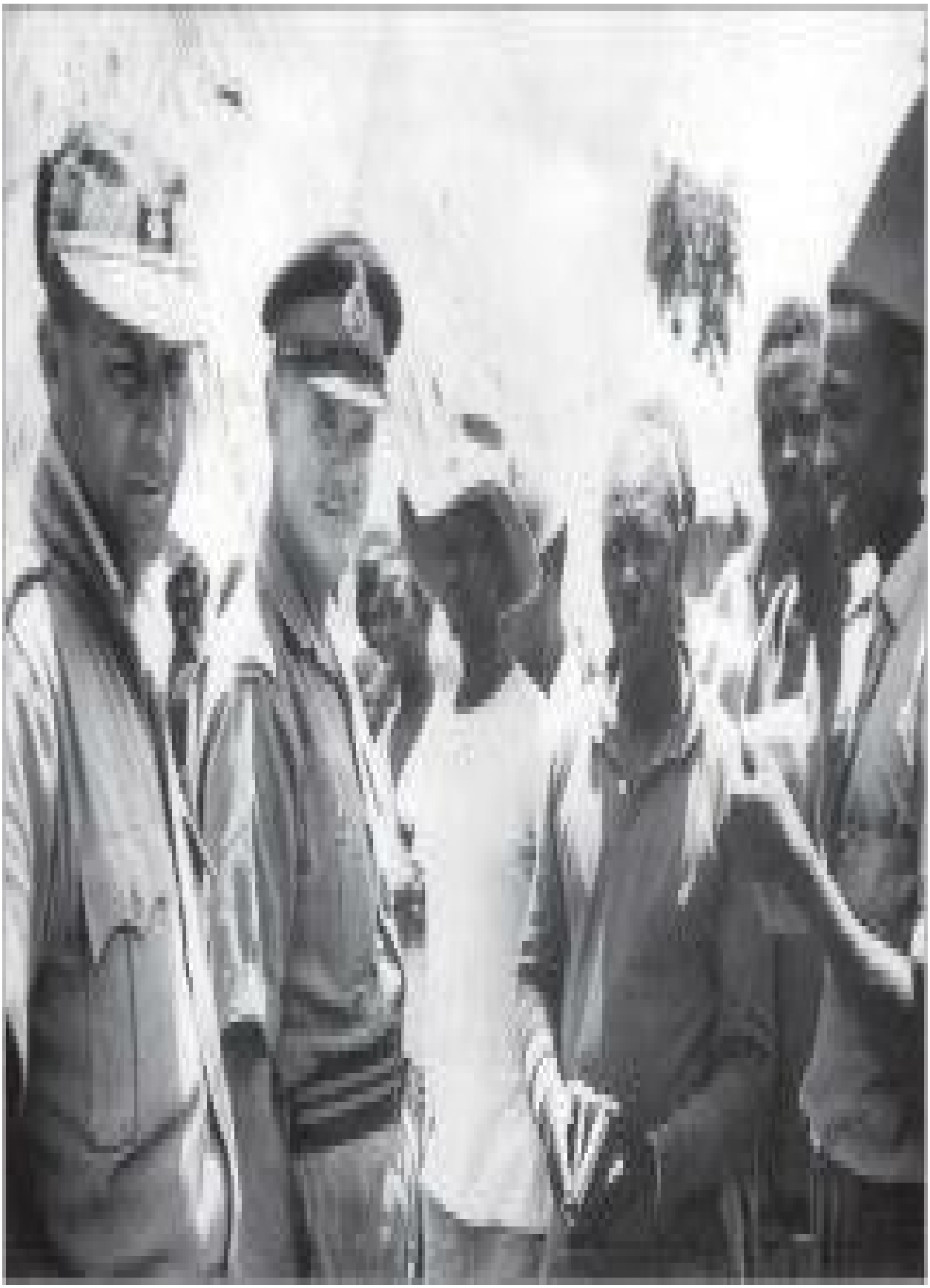


Lieutenant-Colonel Andy Rawlins (RAR) and Major-General Keith Coster chat with Tonga tribesemen at Binga. Photo Masodja

Norman Walsh, Peter Cooke and Cyril White: three fine airmen who made crucial contributions in most of the Zambezi valley operations.

Within Rhodesia at 1730 hours on Wednesday, 19 March 1969 there was a brief reminder that the armed struggle had become a permanent fact of life. A white couple, driving a car from Malawi, was fired on as they approached a lay-by on the main road near the Nyadiri bridge, 42 kilometres northeast of Mrewa. Two bullets hit the car, wounding the driver in his leg and foot. His wife was unharmed. Their assailants disappeared into the bush.

JOC Oyster was formed at Mtoko, trackers were deployed and a Trojan aircraft was put on standby at New Sarum air force base. All that was discovered were 12 spent AK-47 cartridges. Heavy rain had washed out the tracks and the BSAP had to be content with a description of two men dressed in civilian clothes, one in black trousers and a bush-hat, and accompanied by two local recruits.

The next encounter was 20 kilometres to the east of the ambush, at 0950 hours on Tuesday, 25 March. Two armed and bush-hatted Africans, wearing green shirts, khaki shorts and boots, encountered a domestic servant carrying tea to his employer in the fields on Prospect farm. Speaking in Chinyanja (a Malawian dialect), they threatened to kill him if he reported their presence. The BSAP responded and later in the day spotted a cooking fire on Rukore hill, ten kilometres away to the north in the Budjga African Purchase Area.

A search was fruitless but the next day the SB was informed by an anonymous letter that a local African was harbouring the ambushers and two others. In the afternoon the BSAP was told that four terrorists had been seen on Thursday, 20 March, living in the bush on the banks of the Nyadiri river, two kilometres from the main Salisbury–Mtoko road, and being fed by a sympathetic African storekeeper. The leader was believed to be a local man who had been in Zambia and was seeking recruits for terrorist training. It was also alleged that five terrorists, led by another local, were living in the area of Chieftainess Charewa. The BSAP took the storekeeper into custody for

interrogation and dispatched trackers to find the ambushers' camp.

The BSAP had another distraction, Operation Lurcher, the pursuit in the Zwimba Tribal Trust Land for two ZAPU survivors of Operation Cauldron, Raphael Muvengi and Peter Sikongo. At 1130 hours on Saturday, 26 March a BSAP patrol officer spotted two armed African males wearing bush-hats, fleeing from farm 334 in the adjacent Chitemborgwizi African Purchase Area, 25 kilometres south of Sinoia. The two fugitives proved elusive but the Zwimba locals betrayed four youthful recruits who had received three weeks' training on the SKS rifle. A further success was the arrest in Salisbury of Jairos Tawireyi for purchasing supplies for Muvengi and Sikongo. The SB asked that the BSAP ground coverage and Internal Affairs personnel be made aware that the ZAPU leader, George Nyandoro, had stated in London recently that ZAPU was acutely conscious that its lack of manpower made the recruitment of locals necessary.

A day later, on Thursday, 27 March, attention switched back to the northeast when four armed men stole clothing and food from Gora Hill store, 18 kilometres southeast of Mount Darwin. Their footprints were similar to those found in previous incidents.

The next day, 28 March, four armed men were seen 20 kilometres southeast of Gora store in the Umfurudzi wildlife area northeast of Shamva. Then two-day-old northbound tracks of four men were seen four kilometres south of the Mufurudzi river. Shortly the trackers came upon a just-evacuated, well-established camp for four. It was high on a wooded hill, facing northeast, and included a cave. It had two well-sited observation posts and an escape route to the west. It was estimated to be six months old because the occupants had planted mango trees that were already six inches high. It yielded an AK magazine loaded with eight rounds, a mess tin containing a small quantity of dried fish, a small axe, three pairs of khaki uniform trousers, a khaki uniform shirt, other clothing, a worn pair of ZAPU-issued figure-of-8 soled boots with the name 'Mamutsi' written inside, an entrenching tool, cooking utensils, a brown plastic plug from a Soviet RGD grenade, the Rhodesia Herald of 21 December 1968 and the Sunday Mail of 22 December 1968. A cooking roster listed Jongwe, Nyamukapa, Nyoni and Mamutsi.

The SB concluded the four were survivors of Operation Excess and that

Nyoni was David Jimmy Nyoni, Mamutsi could be William Mamutsi and Jongwe and Nyamukapa were Jacharia Chikoko and Emmanuel Sanyika, the last two both members of ZAPU's D Section. Sanyika had escaped from Excess by swimming the Zambezi and had reached Lusaka on 25 or 26 November 1968. There he had been given ten days' recuperation leave at Zimbabwe House before being debriefed by the ZAPU intelligence section and being sent to the Luthuli camp. He returned to Lusaka in January 1969, saying that he would be escorting a group into Rhodesia to "show them the places". He had not been seen in Lusaka since.

At 1600 hours that Friday, 28 March four armed men were seen by African youths on a road linking Darien and Odenferra farms south of Mount Darwin. This prompted Superintendent Brian Chalk of SB to travel from Salisbury to Mount Darwin in the early hours of 29 March to interrogate the African storekeeper and the youths separately. He concluded that they were telling the truth and by 1030 hours a PATU stick had found two bootprints recognized as those seen at the Gora store, and two barefoot tracks. The spoor headed across the main road to Shamva going east into difficult country.

Shortly thereafter a resting place for four was found. PATU continued to follow the tracks while JOC Oyster moved to Shamva at 1230 hours to cover the area southeast of Mount Darwin using regular and reserve PATU sticks, Major Leon Jacob's 2 Commando 1RLI, an RRAF Alouette III helicopter and a Trojan. The follow-up discovered another camp for four men on the banks of the Mufurudzi river just inside the wildlife area.

The next day, 30 March, a further camp for four was found in the hills six kilometres to the south. Estimated to be two to three days old, it contained clothing, cooking utensils and a grenade. At 1420 hours on Monday, 31 March, a kilometre away, high on the northeastern face of a heavily wooded rocky outcrop, fire was exchanged with two armed men in a cave. The men escaped through a bolthole in the rear of the cave and fled in a westerly direction through a downpour that obliterated their tracks. They left behind most of the tins of bully beef and clothing stolen from Gora Hill store along with a cocked and loaded government-issue Lee-Enfield SMLE .303 rifle, three AK magazines holding 90 rounds, a fertilizer bag containing three grenade primers, one RGD primed grenade, ten khaki web pouches

containing 300 AK rounds and a ministry of education notebook. The notebook had an entry signed by W. Mamutsi, dated 27 December 1968, listing provisions purchased to the value of £20/10/6. The list matched one found on Tawirey (the supplier of Muvengi and Sikongo) who admitted to purchasing goods for Gideon Gwashavannu of Mrewa, who was supplying "some men in the forest".

A hunt for Gwashavannu ensued. With the spoor lost, the RLI and PATU commenced cross-graining patrols and searching local caves in Umfurudzi before being withdrawn on Saturday, 5 April in the hope of encouraging the terrorists to move.

The BSAP apprehended a dozen ZAPU sympathizers. The JOC was closed at noon on 14 April 1969, leaving BSAP ground coverage personnel to patrol the area. Their search was fruitless as their quarry had fled southwest to Botswana and would later be flown to Zambia.

CHAPTER NINETEEN:

THE LULL, 1969

With ZAPU and ZANU pausing to take stock, the Rhodesian army continued to fret about its lack of reserves even when detailed only to assist the BSAP in patrolling the border. It recalled that, after the demise of the Federation in 1963, two infantry companies were required to cover the Zambezi frontier. Since 1965, however, the task demanded seven infantry companies to patrol 1,000 kilometres from the Mozambican border west of the Musengezi river to the Botswanan border a short way south of Kazungula.

The army continued to worry about the northeastern border east of the Musengezi which was defined by a three-wire cattle fence along which a few intermittent BSAP patrols operated and which was threatened with penetration by the alliance between ZAPU, the SAANC and Frelimo. Operation Flotilla had shown how easily the border could be crossed and intelligence reports indicated that there were 200 ZAPU, 400 ANC and 400 Frelimo in the Petuake area of Zambia. The necessity of deploying seven companies (some 840 men) left 1 and 2 brigades (based in Bulawayo and Salisbury respectively) thin on the ground if territorial and reserve troops were not to be mobilized. The seven companies deployed were: 1 and 2 (Independent) RRR national service companies, two RLI commandos, one RAR company and two SAP companies. The rotation affected the RLI as it mustered three commandos and the 50-man Support Group. The C Squadron SAS had been removed from border control for specialist training and clandestine operations. The RAR with five companies was better off but not if a problem emanated from Botswana in the west. The eastern border was not yet threatened because Frelimo was yet to cross the Zambezi in Mozambique. That border was the responsibility of 3 Brigade but the latter existed only as a basic headquarters without an allocation of regular troops. A further problem for the army was that border control was arduous and boring

and allowed the units little time for vital counter-insurgency or limited-war training. The army called for more regular troops but the ministry of defence and Treasury, however, were deaf to that plea.

Another immediate problem was a proclaimed terrorist threat to capture a Rhodesian town or village, presumably a border settlement like Kazungula, Victoria Falls, Chirundu or Kanyemba. As this would be a severe blow to Rhodesian public morale and would produce a strong demand for retaliation, the OCC commissioned a study of what form of retaliation would be appropriate. They knew that electric power for Zambia from Kariba could be turned off or terrorists could be pursued into Zambia after an attack. There could be attacks against terrorist camps or government or economic targets in Zambia. The Rhodesian Security Council on 12 August 1965 had granted commanders discretion on ‘hot pursuit’ operations into Zambia. Ian Smith had withdrawn this in the politically sensitive days after the UDI but allowed Ken Flower of the CIO to mount surreptitious operations in Zambia. The international view on ‘hot pursuit’ was found to be ambiguous but seemed to allow the pursuit of criminals across a border. The Paris Pact of 1928 had renounced war as an instrument of policy but condoned wars of self-defence. This meant retaliation was not illegal but was an act of war. The advice was that ‘hot pursuit’ was possible but would need political approval and would require the pursuers to avoid clashes with Zambian troops such as those which had happened recently when Portuguese troops had chased insurgents into Zambia. Action had to be swift to minimize or avoid international complications. Targets would have to be carefully selected to avoid anything belonging to international or multinational organizations like the Anglo-American Corporation or the Shell Oil Company. This limited the targets to rail and road bridges, fuel lines and the like and should be attacked by helicopter-borne forces rather than bombed by aircraft to minimize or prevent Zambian civilian casualties.

The consequence of retaliation was certain to be a protest to the UN and a call for the use of force. As Zambia lacked sufficient forces, the Rhodesians feared she might be reinforced by the OAU and be given military aid from the Communist bloc. Furthermore, Harold Wilson had publicly declared that any incursion by Rhodesian forces would warrant the use of force by the UN and might result in British occupation as had just happened in Anguilla. No

parallel was seen with Israel's retaliation against her Arab neighbours because, unlike Rhodesia, the existence of Israel was recognized by the UN and she had the support of the West. When American tourists were harmed in an attack at Victoria Falls, the West would be more sympathetic to a Rhodesian retaliation. The reaction to a pursuit or an attack on a terrorist target would be less objectionable than an attack on a Zambian government installation. The danger of any action was also that, far from dissuading Kaunda from supporting the terrorists, it could drive him to help them more. It could lead to further UN action on the pretext of Rhodesia being a threat to peace. South Africa might dissociate herself from retaliation if none of her policemen had been hurt. Therefore care would have to be taken to brief Pretoria in advance. South Africa, fearing international repercussions, might withdraw her police from Rhodesia but Vorster's threats of retaliation against Zambia made this unlikely.

The conclusion was a recommendation against 'hot pursuit' and reprisal attacks because of the international repercussions. If, however, such actions were deemed necessary, cabinet authority would be required and a 'hot pursuit' operation should only continue while contact with the terrorists was maintained and while a clash with the Zambians did not materialize. Any reprisal attacks had to be on terrorist targets and be swiftly executed by ground forces to minimize international reaction. While the military mused thus, on 20 June 1969 the Rhodesian electorate changed the political situation by voting in a referendum for Rhodesia to become a republic. This prompted the resignation of the governor, Sir Humphrey Gibbs, long beleaguered in Government House, Salisbury. Again the British were outraged but could do nothing about it. Otherwise life went on as normal. The army manned the border and, as the security alert lessened, the RRAF, soon to be the RhAF, relaxed the standby status of its pilots. It kept them busy nonetheless supporting the troops on the border and learning techniques. Among them was the problem of night landings and take-offs on bush airstrips. In October it was found that landing was possible using 'Scotchlite' markers, lit up by the aircraft's landing lights.

CHAPTER TWENTY:

OPERATION HORIZON, OCTOBER 1969

Despite all its setbacks, ZAPU persisted with the idea of subverting Rhodesia's African population. To that end, it instructed Phineas Majuru, its chief of operations, to survey entry points and lines of march for future incursions. At the same time there was a debate on strategy within the ZAPU leadership with Akim Ndholvu and James Chikerema urging the adoption of hit-and-run attacks across the Zambezi. Their targets would be police posts, railway lines and the like. The majority of the ZANU high command, however, worried that such attacks would embarrass their hosts, President Kaunda and the Zambian government. Eventually ZAPU would be reduced to hit-and-run after further failures of subverted expeditions.

For the moment ZAPU decided to hazard simultaneous incursions by small groups at the end of 1969 and early 1970. A reason was to make a show of force to coincide with and to impress the 14-nation meeting of OAU foreign ministers in Lusaka.

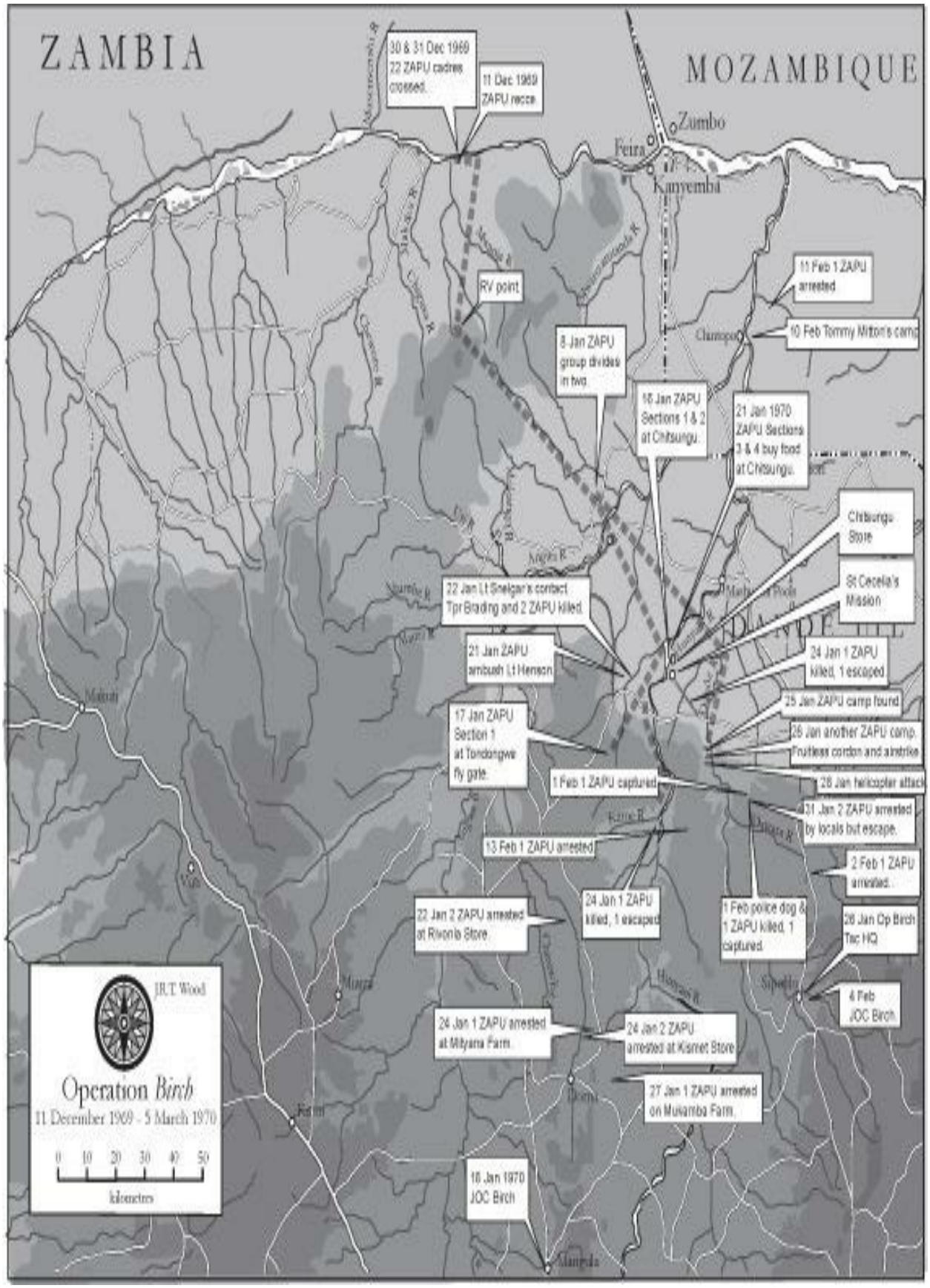
ZAPU and ZANU had been under pressure to unify from the OAU and others for many years. Chikerema, ZAPU's external leader, and George Nyandoro, a leading ZAPU figure, had favoured it and, indeed, in early 1969 had approached Herbert Chitepo of ZANU on it on the understanding that Joshua Nkomo, detained in Rhodesia, agreed. Chikerema's rival, Jason Moyo, however, believed Nkomo did not. The tension between the Chikerema and Moyo factions began to affect the rank and file. Shona cadres began to switch their allegiance from ZAPU to ZANU. The cadres themselves were getting bored and restless, cooped up in camps. They were also critical of ZAPU's approach to the armed struggle. Their discontent would lead to a leadership schism and a debilitating mutiny in March 1971.

ZAPU moved its trained men to its two forward bases, C1 at DK mine, close to the Zambezi in Zambia and north of Wankie in Rhodesia, and C2 near Chakwenga mine, east of Lusaka and some 30 kilometres north of the Zambezi. In September 1969 Chikerema addressed his troops at Chakwenga, telling them of plans for further incursions by small groups to recruit and train Rhodesian Africans.

The first inkling the Rhodesian security forces had of ZAPU intentions was a report received at 1300 hours on Thursday, 30 October 1969 of the landing from rubber dinghies of 27 ZAPU men on an island in the Zambezi near Kazungula. They had come from a camp established on the Zambian bank in mid-October. The Rhodesians responded by briefing Captain Brian Robinson at 1610 hours to move SAS trackers and equipment to Victoria Falls that night from Kariba where Robinson was commanding the tracking wing of the School of Infantry. At 1630 hours 1 Brigade ordered 1RAR headquarters and Major Nigel Langdale's B and Major Peter Grobelaar's E companies to move to the Kazungula area. Major Vic Walker's D Company 1RAR remained in reserve at Methuen barracks in Bulawayo. Two platoons of 1 (Independent) Company RRR moved to the Secunda area. Aircraft of 4 Squadron RRAF flew in, joining two Alouette helicopters.

JOC Horizon was established at Sprayview airstrip, Victoria Falls, at 0500 hours on 31 October. At that moment, the SAS reconnaissance of the island found most of it swampy with a small habitable area and its shoreline devoid of tracks. By 1140 hours the reconnaissance was complete and the 1RAR commander, Lieutenant-Colonel William Godwin, planned an assault on the island by 50 men at first light on Sunday, 1 November, followed by its clearance by B and E companies. A search of the island by the SAS and these two companies, however, found nothing. Consequently JOC Horizon ordered intensive patrolling of the Rhodesian bank from Victoria Falls to Kazungula in case there had been an incursion.

The JOC closed at 1200 hours on 4 November and normal border-control patrols resumed. On 21 November 1969 a BSAP patrol found two canoes with fishing nets on the Rhodesian bank opposite the island which seemed to offer an explanation of the earlier sighting.


ZAMBIA
MOZAMBIQUE
30 & 31 Dec 1969 22 ZAPU cadres crossed.
11 Dec 1969 ZAPU recce
Zumbo
Feira
Kanyemba
RV point
11 Feb 1 ZAPU arrested
10 Feb Tommy Mitton's camp
8 Jan ZAPU group divides in two
16 Jan ZAPU Sections 1 & 2 at Chitsungu
21 Jan 1970 ZAPU Sections 3 & 4 buy food at Chitsungu
Chitsungu Store
St Cecelia's Mission
22 Jan Lt Snelgar's contact Tpr Brading and 2 ZAPU killed.
21 Jan ZAPU ambush Lt Henson
24 Jan 1 ZAPU killed, 1 escaped
25 Jan ZAPU camp found
26 Jan another ZAPU camp. Fruitless cordon and airstrike
17 Jan ZAPU Section 1 at Tondongwe fly gate.
1 Feb 1 ZAPU captured
28 Jan helicopter attack
31 Jan 2 ZAPU arrested by locals but escape.
13 Feb 1 ZAPU arrested
2 Feb 1 ZAPU arrested.
22 Jan 2 ZAPU arrested at Rivonia Store
24 Jan 1 ZAPU killed, 1 escaped
1 Feb police dog & 1 ZAPU killed, 1 captured.
28 Jan Op Birch Tac HQ
4 Feb JOC Birch
24 Jan 1 ZAPU arrested at Mbyama Farm
24 Jan 2 ZAPU arrested at Kismet Store
27 Jan 1 ZAPU arrested on Mukamba Farm.
16 Jan 1970 JOC Birch
J.R.T. Wood
Operation Birch
11 December 1969 - 5 March 1970
0 10 20 30 40 50
kilometres

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE:

OPERATIONS BIRCH, TEAK, CHESTNUT AND PLUTO, NOVEMBER 1969-MARCH 1970

In early November 1969 the commanders of the personnel at ZAPU's C2 camp, Elias Kumbakumba, the camp commander, and Phineas Majuru were summoned to Lusaka to confer with James Chikerema and the ZAPU hierarchy, namely: Abraham Mkiwame, the vice-president; Embassy Dube, the chief of personnel; Robson Manyika, chief of communications; and Joseph Musa, chief of staff. They decided to choose 25 men for an incursion into Rhodesia by a unit of four sections. Each five-to-six-man section would comprise a commander, deputy commander, a political commissar, a medical officer, a security officer and one or two rank and file. The destinations given to the sections were Section 1 Melsetter, Section 2 Umtali, Section 3 Mount Darwin and Section 4 Mtoko and Salisbury.

Consequently, during the first week of December 1969, Phineas Majuru and Elias Kumbakumba briefed the commanders of the sections: Onias Kupeta of Section 1, James Sachikunya of Section 2, Josiah Chirowudza of Section 3 and Godfrey Nhumzvi of Section 4. Their target areas were given and they were told they would cross the Zambezi on two following nights and rendezvous as a group of 22 near the Msambamzhou range. After the briefing, Kumbakumba ordered Onias Kupeta and Canaan Dube to accompany three members of the reconnaissance unit into Rhodesia to survey the route. The men chosen included a Cauldron veteran and member of the reconnaissance team, Aaron Dzworiro.

Section 1, the six men destined for Melsetter, were: John Onias Kupera (alias Muti), the commander; Canaan Dube, the deputy commander; Clever Musu (alias Gutu), the medical officer; Joseph Conrad Togaraseyi (alias Gombakomba alias Silas Mugananzi), ZAPU's deputy chief of personnel

responsible for selecting recruits; Abel Sithole (alias Abel Sinametsi, a former singer with the Golden City quartet press-ganged in Lusaka); and Nicholas Muzanenhamo (alias Garikayi alias Taferinyika Moto), the security officer.

Section 2, the five men destined for Umtali, were: James Sachikonya, the commander; Ignatius Tshumba, the deputy commander; Cephas Gara, the political commissar; Timothy Moyo, the medical officer; and Lewis Chinyemba, the security officer.

Section 3, the six men with a radio transmitter destined for Mrewa area, were: Josiah Chirowodza, commander; Shepherd Dombodzuku, deputy commander; Freddy Tiriwanhu, medical officer; Godfrey Gorima, security officer; Pious Kuuya, radio operator; and Phineas Majuru, ZAPU's chief of operations, who was instructed to report back on difficulties encountered. Majuru kept a diary.

Section 4, the five men destined for Mtoko, were: Godfrey Nhunzvi, the commander; Kenias Mapolisa, deputy commander; Keas Shumba, political commissar; Aaron Chikunya (alias Dzworiro), security officer; and Elias Moyo (alias Maglazi) the medical officer.

The four sections were transported to a temporary camp east of the Musensenshi river where supplies of food and combat boots, camouflage and civilian clothing arrived from Lusaka. The men chose their clothes and footwear. Some preferred boots, others shoes. Each man was issued with a water bottle and mess tins. The food was carried forward to the Zambezi and stored in two underground shelters near the river at the crossing point. At this point three men refused to go, on the grounds they would only consider operating in Matabeleland, so they were sent back to Lusaka. The rest picked what appealed to them from their individual allocation of four to six tins of beef, one of fish, one of pork luncheon meat, three to four small tins of condensed milk, a packet of figs or dates, four packets of biscuits, a tin of either beans or, where beans were short, of fish, one packet of sweets and three to four sticks of biltong. The allocation was intended to last a man until habitation was reached and further supplies obtained. Each man was issued with £4/18/6 in Rhodesian currency. The section commanders each received a compass, a pair of binoculars and maps for his area. Each section had a

transistor radio. In Chirowodza's section, Pious Kuuya was given a Morse-key radio transmitter-receiver for direct communication with Lusaka.

On Thursday, 11 December 1969 Philimon Muguni, Shava and Silvester Maderu, three ZAPU reconnaissance unit members, and John Onias Kupeta and Canaan Dube, two of the selected men, crossed the Zambezi in a green collapsible canoe and entered Rhodesia just east of the confluence of the Mwanja river and spent two days surveying a route, penetrating some 15 kilometres south of Mpata gorge and leaving behind a food cache. This became a rendezvous point later.

While these preparations were being made, to the southwest at DK camp, north of Wankie, training had begun for a second incursion, which the Rhodesians would call Operation Chestnut. Job Maposa, a Soviet-trained intelligence officer, and three ZAPU cadres were taught basic intelligence techniques. The aim of Chestnut was to recruit and train locals in the Mpindo area of Tjolotjo in Matabeleland. A third operation was timed to begin on New Year's Day. The Rhodesians named it Operation Teak and its intention was to insert 21 ZAPU operators in the Lupane-Nkai, Binga and Wankie areas.

On Sunday, 28 December the 22 men destined for northern Mashonaland left C2 camp and marched to the reconnaissance unit's camp where they exchanged their weapons for new ones, either AK or SKS rifles. Each section was armed with an RPD machine gun and an RPG-2 rocket launcher. The next day they prepared their kit for their crossing and each drew 620 7.62mm rifle rounds, three grenades (one RGD-5, one F1 and an incendiary), an RPG-2 projectile and 8,900 grams of explosives of Trotyl or Soviet gelignite plus a number of detonators. Each section received an RPD ammunition drum. Fuses were issued to the section commanders. Sachikunya was given a plunger-detonating device. As Rhodesia was enduring an exceptionally rainy season, two inflatable boats were provided for crossing the flooded rivers. Phineas Majuru was carrying a handwritten 'memorandum of intelligence unit'. This described the composition and counter-insurgency roles of the Rhodesian security forces and proposed tactics in relation to them. It argued that the shortage of troops left vital Rhodesian installations unguarded and vulnerable to sabotage and attack by small groups of intruders. Such attacks

would spread the Rhodesians' forces and make more incursions possible.

At dusk on Tuesday night, 30 December 1969 sections 1 and 2 began crossing to a point approximately 1,700 metres east of the confluence of the Mwanja river. Because each of the two boats, manned by Phineas Majuru and Shava of the reconnaissance unit, could only carry one man and his equipment, the crossing took hours. They were accompanied by Manuel and Zacks (alias Elias) Nkosi of the reconnaissance unit. Both men's packs were filled with maize meal. The crossing complete, the two sections set off in a southeasterly direction toward the rendezvous point, en route sleeping four kilometres south of the Zambezi on Wednesday night.

That night ZAPU sections 3 and Section 4 crossed into Rhodesia accompanied by Philimon Muguni and Silvester Muderu, two reconnaissance members also carrying maize meal. All four sections met at the rendezvous point near the Msanbansovu mountains on Thursday, 2 January 1970. On the way there, being heavily laden, they had dumped some of their equipment. They also noticed the patrolling helicopters and light aircraft and encountered numerous black rhinos. They camped together for the night and cooked and consumed the maize meal brought by the four reconnaissance unit members. The next morning the latter four members returned to Zambia, leaving the 22 men to march southeastward undetected through the Chewore game reserve and through the mountains.

To the southwest the Rhodesian border-control patrols missed a crossing near Chete island in Kariba. It was a three-man ZAPU reconnaissance for what would be Operation Granite. Having completed their three-day survey, the three men returned to their crossing point.

On 1 January 1970 a five-man ZAPU unit had left C1, DK camp, and crossed the Zambezi at the Devil's gorge, 25 kilometres east of Deka. At 0600 hours the next day, however, 15 sets of tracks were spotted by a border-control patrol from Major Nigel Langdale's B Company 1RAR on the east bank of the Gwai river, 14 kilometres south of its confluence with the Zambezi. The tracks were soon lost but a pencil and a watchstrap were found two kilometres to the east. The group had split in two with five heading northeast toward the Zambezi and eight heading south. The troops followed the five sets of tracks southward toward the Gwai river bridge but lost them when

they turned. Casting around for spoor, the troops found nearer the bridge two buried fish tins, plastic packets of dried fruit, two unidentified tins, a packet of dates and two biscuit wrappers. All were South African in origin and similar to those found on Operations Cosmic and Mansion. In response, 1 Brigade moved Major Peter Grobelaar’s E Company 1RAR to Dahlia near Dett.

PATU operators in combat. Photo Neville Spurr

On 3 January 1970 1 Brigade established JOC Teak at the Deka airstrip with B Company 1RAR and a PATU stick on strength. The RRAF contributed light aircraft and two Alouette helicopters.

At 1025 hours a BSAP river patrol found spoor on the southern bank of the Zambezi, three-quarters of a mile east of the Gwai–Zambezi confluence. Foreign khaki webbing straps were picked up and a rubberized, collapsible, canvas four-man German ‘Pouch’ canoe was seen on the Zambian bank. It was recovered by a combined BSAP-RAR patrol. The 18-foot canoe contained four maroon Mae Wests and two paddles. Trackers cast around and found 24-hour-old tracks of five and a further five assessed as 12 hours old.

At 1215 hours, moving north along the east bank of the Gwai, a PATU stick found the four-hour-old spoor of six. B Company reinforced it and shortly they arrived at a resting place for six; farther on they came across a full Eastern bloc Preta water bottle with a wet cover. The Rhodesian security forces concluded that they were looking for a small ZAPU reconnaissance unit.

At 1600 hours, while confirming the crossing point in the Devil’s gorge from midstream, a BSAP launch was fired on by some 29 men on the Zambian bank. The launch was holed three times and Patrol Officer J.W.F. Pearman sustained a minor flesh wound. The boat crew and the PATU on the Rhodesian bank returned fire. The boat returned to shore safely and Pearman was taken to the JOC. Two PATU sticks mounted an ambush on the crossing point while army and BSAP patrols continued. BSAP ground coverage units covered Lukosi and Tinde missions. Major Peter Grobelaar deployed one of his E Company platoons to the Lukosi–Gwai confluence. The BSAP established road checks at the Dett crossroads and railway at Sawmills.

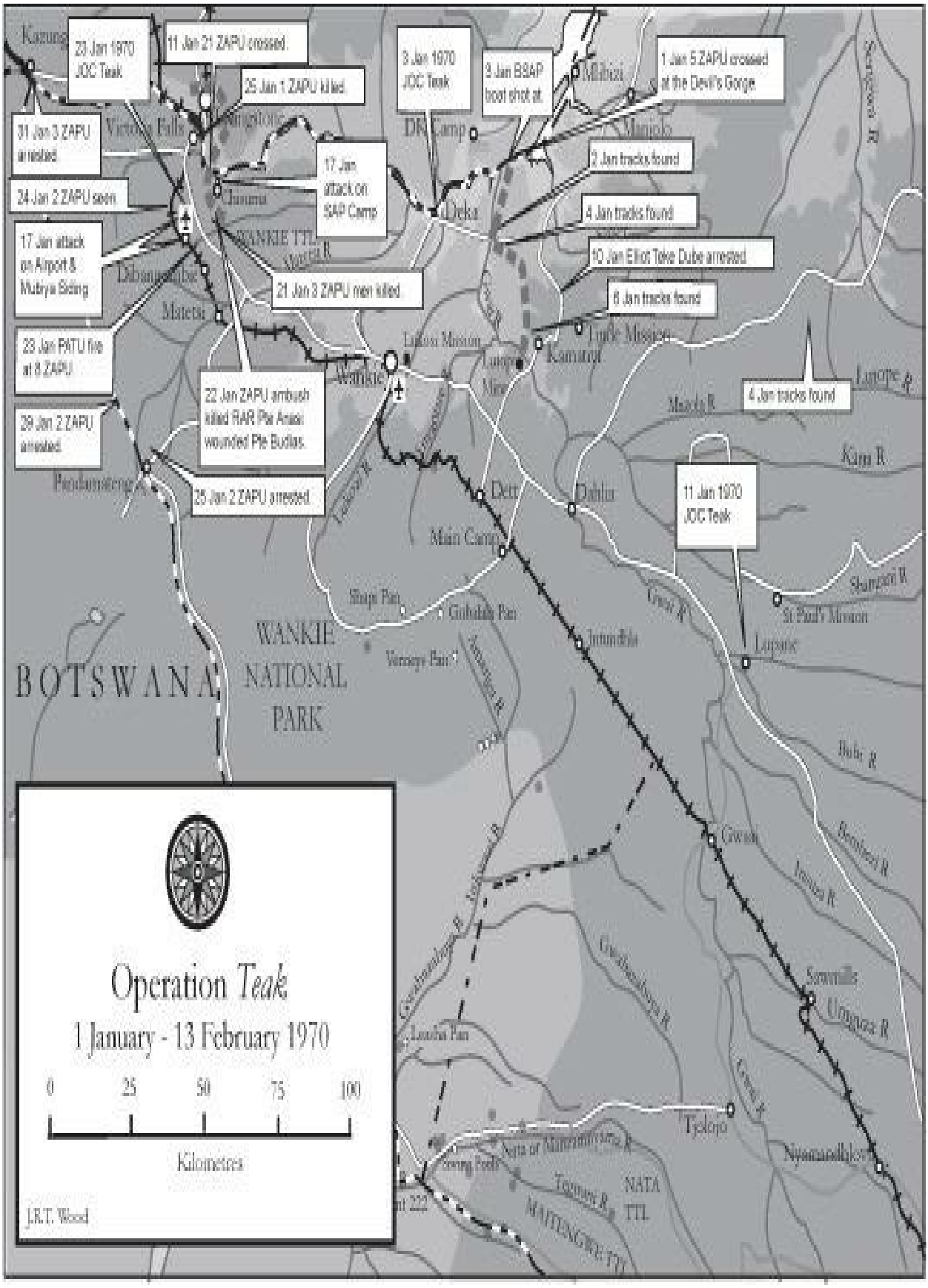
Unbeknown to JOC Teak, that day the three ZAPU reconnaissance men had returned to their crossing point opposite Chete island and waited for their

recovery boat. When it did not arrive, two of them, Phillimon Mabuza Ncube (who would command the Granite incursion) and Petros Ndebele, swam across to Zambia using their life jackets. The third man, Elliot Teke Dube, an Algerian-trained insurgent, decided to return to Zambia via Victoria Falls. He walked eastward to Binga. He had been there on an earlier reconnaissance and knew he could catch a bus on the road to Kamativi where he hoped to secure help from an acquaintance, Temba Ndabambe Tshuma, before leaving for Botswana or Zambia via the Victoria Falls.

At 0800 hours on Sunday, 4 January 1970 a B Company 1RAR platoon relieved the PATU sticks at the crossing point and established a long-term ambush there. E Company deployed to Gwai river bridge, keeping one platoon in reserve and one platoon checking possible tracks across the road to Milibizi at the western end of Kariba lake. The condition of the road due to the heavy rain, however, hampered vehicle movement. The tracking exercise was producing a confused picture. At 0628 hours tracks of two men were found crossing a road in the Manjolo Tribal Trust Land in a southeasterly direction. Next, at 0812 hours, three-day-old northward-bound tracks of three were found. At 0845 hours a platoon of E Company encountered two sets of 12-hour-old tracks on a road in the Busi Tribal Trust Land. Half the platoon backtracked northward while the other half tracked southward. From 1200 hours a PATU stick from Kamativi checked a north–south road west of the Lutope river in case the spoor being followed by E Company turned east. By 1645 hours E Company reached a resting place, finding a Cuban sweet paper, a toothbrush and two 7.62mm medium bullets near the Lutope river. The platoon backtracking northward found the trail getting older as expected.

Earlier, at 0906 hours, a PATU stick found three fresh sets of figure-of-8 tracks parallel to the road east of the Gwai bridge. Then a fourth track joined the three. At 1430 hours the follow-up was taken over by another E Company platoon but at 1500 hours it was withdrawn to join the PATU sticks searching the area northeast of the original spoor. Mobile ground coverage units covered the populated area from the Wankie–Dett crossroads to Kamativi. The JOC kept a Police Reserve PATU stick at Kamativi while further PATU sticks patrolled east of the Gwai river seeking further information from the villagers. At 1700 hours in the Busi Tribal Trust Land a PATU patrol found a two-day-old resting place for three men half a mile east of the earlier location

of the water bottle. JOC Teak concluded that the incursion could be by 15 men pursuing an unknown objective or escorting a mission that had been disturbed by the Rhodesian security forces. To assist its patrols, the JOC requested PRAW aircraft to provide the Telstar radio relay. It also asked for the parachuting of water and rations to its patrols by the Trojans.


23 Jan 1970 JOC Teak
11 Jan 21 ZAPU crossed
25 Jan 1 ZAPU killed
31 Jan 3 ZAPU arrested
24 Jan 2 ZAPU seen
17 Jan attack on Airport & Mubiya Siding
17 Jan attack on SAP Camp
21 Jan 3 ZAPU men killed
23 Jan PATU fire at 8 ZAPU
22 Jan ZAPU ambush killed RAR Pte Anasi wounded Pte Budlas
29 Jan 2 ZAPU arrested
25 Jan 2 ZAPU arrested
3 Jan 1970 JOC Teak
9 Jan BSAP boot shot at
1 Jan 5 ZAPU crossed at the Devil's Gorge
2 Jan tracks found
4 Jan tracks found
10 Jan Elliot Teke Dube arrested
6 Jan tracks found
4 Jan tracks found
11 Jan 1970 JOC Teak
Kazungula
Victoria Falls
Livingstone
Dibamanzi Dube
Matetsi
Wankie
Pandamatenga
Deka
Kamativi
Dett
Dalila
Main Camp
Lupane
St Paul's Mission
WANKIE NATIONAL PARK
BOTSWANA
Operation Teak
1 January - 13 February 1970
0 25 50 75 100
Kilometres
J.R.T. Wood

At 0627 hours on Monday, 5 January 1970 6 Platoon B Company 1RAR, in ambush at the crossing point, heard some 20 or so intermittent voices in Shona and Sindebele on the Zambian bank of the Devil's gorge. The JOC responded by sending a PATU stick at 1400 hours to assist 6 Platoon with observation there. Otherwise, the search of the area south of the Gwai bridge continued with a variety of tracks of differing ages followed and lost. Intensive searches continued by ground coverage units in the populated areas. Border control was transferred in the afternoon to national servicemen of A Company, the Depot RRR, with one platoon in the Milibizi area and the rest at the Deka military camp. Because the firing at the BSAP boat could have been retaliatory, the JOC cancelled boat and helicopter patrols along this stretch of the river. The JOC wanted to be rid of the ZAPU presence on the Zambian bank but worried that Rhodesian retaliation could introduce a new phase in the conflict.

It kept 6 Platoon ambushing the crossing point while the other B Company platoons operated north of the strategic road running east of the Gwai bridge. E Company patrolled the Katete area between the bridge and the escarpment. A survey of traditional incursion routes was entrusted to two PATU sticks operating from Kamativi. BSAP ground coverage extended to Binga while roadblocks to the south were in position and the railway line was being checked.

In failing light at 1900 hours on Monday evening, 5 January 1970 the OP at the crossing point sighted a craft bearing something yellow leaving the northern bank two kilometres downstream. It was not seen to return due to the darkness. Then a light vehicle was heard in Zambia six times between 2000 hours and 0400 hours. JOC Teak thought that what could have been seen was the ZAPU recce unit wearing yellow lifejackets. It surmised that, given the continuing terrorist presence on the Zambian shore, an evacuation of fugitives had been mounted. In response the JOC maintained operations in the area, resumed boat patrols and asked for intensified BSAP ground coverage of the adjacent African districts of Lupane, Gokwe, Nkai and Tjolotjo.

A search of the suspected new crossing area on Tuesday, 6 January found

nothing. Nevertheless an OP was manned there to supplement the ambush effort at the original crossing point. Otherwise, the patrolling effort, reinforced by aerial reconnaissance, concentrated on the west bank of the Gwai. Two tracks, one of a Mars boot (the Rhodesian government pattern) and the other a gumboot, were found six kilometres northwest of Kamativi. Ground coverage activity intensified in the Kamativi area.

That evening, Tuesday, 6 January, 439 kilometres away to the northeast, Phineas Majuru and his undiscovered ZAPU companions were suffering from hunger in the Chewore game reserve in northern Mashonaland. He switched on his transistor radio to hear the Rhodesian government announcement that a terrorist gang was being tracked after crossing the Zambezi north of Wankie three days previously and that a police boat had been fired upon during an unprovoked attack by 20 men. Majuru then tuned to Lusaka Radio, hearing an optimistic ZAPU claim to have attacked Makuti, killing three Rhodesian soldiers who were buried at night. The next day, the ZAPU group hunted but were rewarded with only a tortoise to eat.

That day, Wednesday, 7 January 1970, JOC Teak maintained the ambush and OPs on the crossing points. The day's searches yielded only a British army 37-pattern water bottle, two kilometres south of the crossing point. It was estimated to have been dropped three weeks previously. Southward spoor was discovered and lost just west of Kamativi. A forward BSAP headquarters was established at Kamativi Police Reserve base and intensive ground coverage continued in the entire affected area.

On Thursday, 8 January 1970, in northern Mashonaland, the 22-man ZAPU unit was approaching the Angwa river and split up into two eleven-man groups: sections 1 and 2 and sections 3 and 4, and went in different directions. To lighten their load the first group abandoned their inflatable boat and waded across the Angwa. Their immediate problem was to find food.

For its part, JOC Teak removed the PATU OP at the suspected crossing point. Spoor of one gumboot and one figure-of-8 sole were found west of Kamativi at 1400 hours heading toward Lutopi mine but was lost after a short distance. Lutopi mine was checked. A Company 2RRR on border control at Binga reported that at 1230 hours their OP had heard and seen a vehicle in the trees in Zambia across the Sebungwe narrows. A reconnaissance aircraft

responded but saw nothing.

JOC Teak was reinforced by a territorial combat-tracker team, and requested two more. More signallers arrived and were deployed to high ground to improve radio coverage. The trackers were sent to examine the areas of the original sightings. Two tracks were relocated at 1400 hours, two kilometres north of Lutopi mine and 14 kilometres west of Kamativi, but were lost after a short distance.

On Friday, 9 January 1970 JOC Teak kept its units scouring the riverlines and the hinterland. Spoor found on the previous day was relocated but lost at 1800 hours, two kilometres west of Kamativi. Reinforced by two more combat-tracker teams, the JOC had all the three concentrate on the area of the original sighting to establish the number of men being sought and the direction they had gone.

Hopes rose on Saturday, 10 January 1970 when a local African reported to the police that under a bridge in a dry riverbed, he had been offered a shilling by an unusually large-headed African to buy him a large Coca-Cola. The strange African had a white film around his mouth, a sure sign of hunger and thirst. The police reacted but could not find the man.

Then, that morning, at a roadblock 15 kilometres northwest of Tinde mission on the Binga–Kamative road Section Officer Timothy Andrew Cherry checked a bus travelling from Binga and arrested Elliot Teke Dube after he had failed to produce any means of identification. He was wearing an old bush-hat with an artificial leopard-skin band round the crown, a light blue sports shirt, dark green trousers with a faint check and no shoes. When stripped he was found to be wearing the ZAPU-issue blue boxer shorts. He was carrying a torch containing Indian-made Natex batteries, a pen issued by a commercial firm in Choma, Zambia, a Chinese toothbrush, a small tube of Zambian-made Pepsodent toothpaste and some Zambian currency. He also had a notebook containing jottings obviously connected with reconnaissance missions within Rhodesia.

JOC Teak kept its troops searching riverlines for tracks. On the east bank of the Gwai, ten kilometres south of the crossing point, they located ten-to-12-day-old tracks of four heading south. The tracks were lost after 400 metres.

Patrols continued to base themselves at the Gwai river bridge. The search of the original sighting by the trackers was not yet complete. At 1530 hours barefoot spoor of an individual was found ten kilometres southeast of Kamative near the Gwai and was being investigated, as was a report of a stranger at Kamativi village at 1035 hours.

On Sunday, 11 January 1970 JOC Teak had Dube taken by helicopter to Chete island to point out his crossing point. He was then flown 13 kilometres southeast of Binga to the kraal of Siamande Dube with whom he had left his rifle and pack on the previous Friday evening, 9 January, before boarding his bus. Siamande produced the AK rifle, a full magazine plus 30 rounds, a red lifejacket, a pair of binoculars, medical scissors, Soviet-made hyperdermic needles and other items. The police arrested Siamande Dube and the helicopter took him to Binga for questioning. When the helicopter returned Elliot Teke Dube returned to his crossing point. Here he showed where his companion, Mabusa, had hidden his pack containing camouflage and other clothing, along with nine loaded AK magazines, a water bottle, woollen stockings and plain-soled Clarks boots. Missing were the pack and boots of his other companion, Ndebele.

Although Dube confirmed that he had nothing to do with the current operation, he claimed to have been one of an 18-man group bound for the Kezi area south of Bulawayo, the first of a new ZAPU wave of intruders. Consequently JOC Teak took the precaution of withdrawing all tsetse-fly-control and hunting teams from the Binga area and immediately moving its base from Deka to Lupane. It also ordered a search of Chete island for any sign of a ZAPU encampment. Border control and other patrols continued with combat-tracker teams deployed with A and D RRR and B and E 1RAR companies.

What JOC did not know was that a 21-man unit from the ZAPU camp at Sinde, west of Livingstone, had been issued with rifles, RPD and Degtyaryov machine guns, three pistols, 6,850 rounds, 26 grenades and slabs of TNT and ordered to attack, in the next five days, the SAP camp at Chisuma in the Wankie Tribal Trust Land, 1,500 metres south of the Zambezi and 15 kilometres east of Victoria Falls. The unit had crossed the Zambezi ten kilometres southeast of the Victoria Falls. Its purpose was to kill everyone in

the SAP camp to gain a free hand to recruit and train locals. To distract the security forces, five men would stage a diversion with a hit-and-run attack on the Victoria Falls airport and blow up the railway line south of it.

On Tuesday, 13 January the border-control unit based at Binga, A Company 2RRR, reported that at 1730 hours on the previous afternoon, an explosion had been heard on Chete island and debris and smoke seen but an investigation found nothing. Intensive patrolling and air reconnaissance continued for the next few days.

What the Rhodesians were also unaware of was that in northern Mashonaland the two ZAPU groups were crossing the Angwa valley, trying to avoid being seen by the locals. That day, 13 January, sections 1 and 2 at last had a successful hunt, shooting a wild pig, an impala and a reedbuck, and made contact by radio with ZAPU headquarters in Lusaka.

At 2011 hours on Thursday, 15 January a suspected terrorist was arrested but was shot dead when he tried to escape while being driven to JOC Teak at Lupane.

On Friday, 16 January the lack of results led to a suggestion that JOC Teak should close. Even so, the threat was deemed sufficient to increase the police and army patrols around the Victoria Falls village.

The caution was warranted because at 0115 hours on Saturday, 17 January the five-man ZAPU diversionary attack was mounted on Victoria Falls airport. Their short bursts of fire, however, did little more than shatter the windows of the control tower and terminal. The men left notes written in ballpoint. The first warned: “The bang of our guns has started and shall fight an endless war. Free our leader Nkomo ZAPU. We are not murders [sic] but mere politicians or savages. To hell with overseas agents, capitalist dogs.” The second read: “Wankie is in danger by tomorrow. We are seeing all your plans. Our big eyes are looking at your [sic] and we know all our targets. To Hell with Smith.” They left for Mubiya siding to the south and at 1100 hours blew up the railway line with plastic explosives. Having reconnoitred the SAP camp at Chisuma for days, the main group approached down a dry riverbed and then fanned out into the heavy vegetation on its northern and western perimeter. At 0250 hours they threw grenades and opened fire with

rifles and a Degtyaryov DP machine gun. In the 16 tents of the camp, 29 South African policemen were asleep and one on guard. The fusillade holed all the tents, wounded four men, destroyed the camp radio and damaged all the vehicles. Warrant Officer van Heerden was hit by shrapnel in his left arm and side, Lieutenant André Michael Kuhn in the back, Sergeant Roelef Johannes du Plooy was hit by four bullets in the chest and thigh and Constable van der Merwe in the chest and abdomen. The fierce return fire killed one ZAPU attacker and, lasting over an hour, deterred the ZAPU intention to overrun the camp. To raise the alarm, a policeman drove a Land Rover with a flat tyre to Victoria Falls.

BSAP African Constable Nicholas, attached to the Chisuma camp, had a lucky escape. He was on leave and sleeping at a kraal half a mile away when woken by machine-gun fire. After the attack three Africans arrived, pointed a rifle at him and questioned him. Nicholas lied, telling the men he was a policeman stationed in Gwelo. His host, Ngulube Sibanda, protected him, saying he was his son and should not be shot. One of the men offered him a gun and another showed him grenades. The men asked for food and were given milk and mielie meal. They left at 0430 hours in a southerly direction. As they did, they whistled and someone outside the kraal whistled back.

At the Chisuma store, five armed men dressed in camouflage suits and combat boots roused the storekeeper but, when he was slow in opening the door, burst it open. Inside they paid £3/3/11 for 15 tins of bully beef, ten packets of biscuits and 100 cigarettes. They consumed two tins of beef before leaving when they heard the sound of a vehicle. They left behind on the counter a Walther PPK 7.65mm pistol loaded with seven rounds and dropped several 7.62mm rimmed Degtyaryov cartridges. The storekeeper waited 24 hours before reporting the incident to the police.

At dawn combat-tracker teams and PATU were deployed on the tracks from the Victoria Falls airport and the SAP camp. Later in the day tracks from the Victoria Falls airport were discovered near the railway line, followed, but lost due to rain.

1 Brigade reinforced JOC Teak with C Company 1RAR from Bulawayo. The JOC redeployed troops and positioned aircraft at Wankie airport. At the SAP Chisuma camp the searchers found a dead ZAPU cadre, Sikandhla, wearing

worn figure-of-8 boots and dressed in a short camouflage smock, camouflage trousers, a Soviet belt with a large metal buckle, grey socks and blue boxer shorts. He had on him £10/10/0 in Rhodesian currency and a South African R1 note. In the ZAPU firing positions, the trackers picked up 73 expended 7.62mm (short) cartridge cases, 171 live rounds, ten empty AK magazines, 42 AK ammunition clips, two RPD ammunition belts, five grenade pins, a Soviet fragmentary grenade and an anti-personnel one. The Rhodesians gathered that among the ZAPU attackers were two ex-batmen of the SAP at Chisuma.

The SB team investigating probable local assistance found the ZAPU base camp eight kilometres south of Chisuma. They worked out it had been occupied by 25 or more men from 13–16 January until the previous 24 hours. It appeared that the attackers had also regrouped there before abandoning three packs, a quantity of civilian clothing from which all labels had been removed with the exception of two items from the United Arabic Republic, a small quantity of explosives and ammunition, empty Soviet sugar packets, some food, a lock-back folding Okapi knife, a Soviet water bottle and a dixie marked ‘A.M. Sikosana’, perhaps Moffat Sikosana, a known ZAPU Algerian-trained terrorist.

While troops were deployed to cut-off positions, spoor from the base camp was followed west but was lost at 1530 hours, found again at 1600 hours but had split in two and rejoined later and then scattered. It was hoped that the troop deployments would contain the ZAPU fugitives in an area south of Victoria Falls.

The Rhodesians concluded, correctly, that a new phase of hit-and-run attacks had opened. The press concluded that ZAPU was seeking to impress an OAU meeting in Sudan. ZAPU headquarters in Lusaka claimed their forces had killed eight South African and five Rhodesian soldiers.

Still undiscovered in northern Mashonaland, ZAPU sections 1 and 2 had reached the Hunyani river on Friday, 16 January and dispatched Ignatius Temba and Cephas Gara to the store at St Cecilia’s mission at Chitsungu in the Dande Tribal Trust Land where they purchased cigarettes, flour, cooking oil, tinned milk and a frying pan. After cooking and eating the food the next morning, 17 January, sections 1 and 2 split. Section 1 followed the dirt road

up the escarpment toward the Tondongwe fly gate; Section 2 climbed the escarpment into the Sarawanda range and headed toward the Hunyani–Karoe river confluence.

To the east sections 4 and 5 were moving along the Dande river and on Sunday, 18 January managed to purchase some mielie meal and maize from villagers for six shillings.

At dawn on 18 January the first mistake was made when two members of Section 1 approached the gate guard at Tondongwe and bought a chicken and some mielie meal from him. Their cover story and a figure-of-8 bootprint aroused the guard's suspicions and he reported them to the police. SB personnel responded and followed the tracks of the two men to a point where they joined up with the three others of Section 1.

JOC Birch was formed at Mangula with 1 Commando 1RLI and an RRAF Alouette helicopter under command. The follow-up led to the discovery of a resting place two kilometres south of Tondongwe. The tracks were lost thereafter.

ZAPU sections 3 and 4, meanwhile, were waiting near the Dande river for Chirowodza, Dombo and Dzworiro to recover from illness. They twice sent members to buy food from Chitsungu store. The storekeeper did not betray their presence when Detective Inspector Angus Ross visited him on Tuesday, 20 January. He waited until the next day to tell a tsetse-fly-control ranger, Monck Mason, who, instead of alerting the JOC, reported to his department in Salisbury.

On Operation Teak there was an unconfirmed arrival of ten insurgents in the evening of Monday, 19 January at Musuia store by the railway, 22 kilometres south of Victoria Falls. They told locals that one of them had been killed and that they were heading to Botswana.

At 0715 hours on Wednesday, 21 January a sentry saw three men running away from a C Company 1RAR base camp five kilometres southwest of Chisuma. A combat-tracker team and an RAR section immediately followed spoor southward while helicopters placed stops in depth. At 1120 hours the trackers found a dropped pack containing clothing, food, ammunition and

explosives. At 1250 hours they heard voices in thick bush, stalked and killed Cuban-trained Bhebe and Albert Lali Sikulaz Dube, and Morogoro-trained Mkandhla. They recovered two AK rifles, one Ceska M27 7.65mm pistol, four grenades, 215 rounds of 7.62mm rifle ammunition and two 75-gram slabs of TNT. The dead were dressed in civilian clothes, ZAPU blue boxer shorts and slightly worn suede half-boots with plain crepe soles.

JOC Teak planned a sky-shout programme, ordered the patrolling and ambushing of all routes and the guarding of Kamativi and the Victoria Falls villages. Overnight ambushes, however, proved fruitless.

Searches on Thursday, 22 January uncovered a resting place for 15 men seven kilometres south of Chisuma containing the bully beef tins obtained from the Chisuma store. Intensive patrolling and aerial reconnaissance continued for the rest of the day.

At 1815 hours, in thick bush, four kilometres south of Chisuma, a 16-man ZAPU unit ambushed 7 Platoon C Company 1RAR, wounding RAR privates Mutibwichi Budias and Ignasion Mungani Anasi. Air support was called for and a stop line deployed immediately. Because the dying Anasi was lying close to the ZAPU position, a frantan attack by Trojan and Provost aircraft was ruled out, limiting the aircraft to machine-gunning and rocketing the likely escape route, a thickly wooded gully. The ZAPU men fired back, hitting one aircraft in its starboard flap. Sky-shouting and leaflet drops had no effect. The exchange of fire continued until 2055 hours when the insurgents withdrew and split up. Soon afterward 4 Platoon B Company opened fire when insurgents walked into their ambush on the extreme western edge of stop line facing north. At 2200 hours aircraft dropped flares in a fruitless attempt to halt the ZAPU flight. A group of seven walked through the middle of the stop line and drew fire without loss.

Elsewhere, at 2345 hours, two men shot at an SAP OP on the western end of the Batoka gorge. Fire was returned without result. E Company 1RAR reported hearing shots in the night, perhaps north of the Zambezi. It was thought it could be a signal for terrorists to head in that direction.

The next morning, Friday, 23 January 1970, the ambush position yielded two SKS rifles, a 47-round Degtyaryov drum magazine, packs and water bottles.

During the search a lone terrorist carrying an AK rifle was seen and fired at. At 0635 hours a combat-tracker team led 7 Platoon southward on the spoor and immediately found boots, socks and other clothing. Next, at 0750 hours, they came across two full packs and ammunition. The tracks led to a village five kilometres southwest of Chisuma which was cordoned and searched without result. Tracks of six to eight terrorists were followed to the main Victoria Falls road where they split and crossed into the Fuller forest land. South of the Falls road, two PATU patrols fired at eight uniformed terrorists. JOC Teak responded by deploying two army platoons in the area, stopping the traffic. A thorough search yielded tracks but they were lost in cattle spoor. To co-ordinate the search, JOC Teak moved to Victoria Falls airport. It sent patrols to likely crossing points, had ambushes laid and provided armed escort for road and rail traffic. The BSAP ground coverage continued in the Kamativi, Lupane and Binga areas. The Teak score to date was security forces: one killed and six wounded; ZAPU: four killed.

A BSAP tracker dog team into action. Section Officer Tom Naudé is the handler on the left and Sergeant Nyandoro the right. The pilot is Peter Cooke. Photo Blue and Old Gold

In northern Mashonaland two days of extensive patrolling had continued despite heavy overnight rain obliterating any tracks. At 1130 hours on Wednesday, 21 January two men from ZAPU sections 3 and 4 returned to Chitsungu store to buy tinned meat or biscuits for their onward march. As the store had run out of these items, they decided to stay in the area until stocks arrived at the weekend. What they did not know was that the message from Monck Mason had reached JOC Birch. Furthermore, Chief Chitsungu had reported their presence to the tsetse rangers, resulting in their tracks being followed.

At 1245 hours on 21 January, east of the Tondongwe fly gate, a 4 Troop 1 Commando patrol found spoor 15 kilometres northeast of the fly gate. At 1420 hours a helicopter landed on a hill above the tracks. It had brought an SB member and Lieutenant Nigel Henson, OC 4 Troop, two of his troopers and Lance-Corporal John Ashburner, a qualified tracker from 2 Troop, to assess the track. As Henson and Ashburner led the party along the tracks, they drew fire from an RPD machine gun and a rifle. Henson and Ashburner responded with an Energa rifle grenade and rifle fire before withdrawing up the hill. Their pilot, Flight Lieutenant Hugh Slatter, and his technician, Willie Jervois, on hearing the firing some 200 metres beneath them, had already flown off to collect reinforcements.[12] With the assistance of the passing Kanyemba-based helicopter, Slatter flew in Lieutenant Bruce Snelgar's 2 Troop to begin the follow-up and positioned stop groups. A PRAW aircraft arrived overhead at 1700 hours to provide a radio relay. Difficult terrain and thick bush slowed Snelgar's advance considerably. The helicopters attempted to flush the ZAPU men out of the bush with machine-gun fire but without success. At last light Snelgar and his troops stopped and established ambush positions for the night. All that had been found was a water bottle and an AK magazine. Section 2 had lost two men, in that its security officer, Lewis Chinyemba, had deserted during the Henson's ambush and Timothy Moyo

after it.

PATU stick leader, c. 1970. Photo Blue and Old Gold

That night, Broadlands store, five kilometres east of Mangula was robbed of civilian clothing and 19 tins of bully beef.

Having resumed the follow-up at first light the next morning, Thursday, 22 January, Snelgar caught up with ZAPU Section 2 at 0750 hours, a kilometre east of Henson's contact. In the ensuing engagement lasting until 1100 hours, the commander, James Sachikonya, his political commissar, Cephas Garah and his deputy commander, Ignatius Tsumba, were shot dead. Tsumba, however, killed Trooper Anthony Brading of 2 Troop before being shot through the eye by Corporal Stokes. ZAPU fire wounded Snelgar in his right arm and Trooper McMaster in his left leg. The contact yielded five packs, two AK rifles, one SKS rifle, one RPD machine gun, one RPG bazooka, four RPG projectiles, four grenades, six blocks of explosives, 41 detonators and 1,500 7.62mm rounds. Snelgar and McMaster were casevaced to Mangula hospital and then flown to Salisbury.

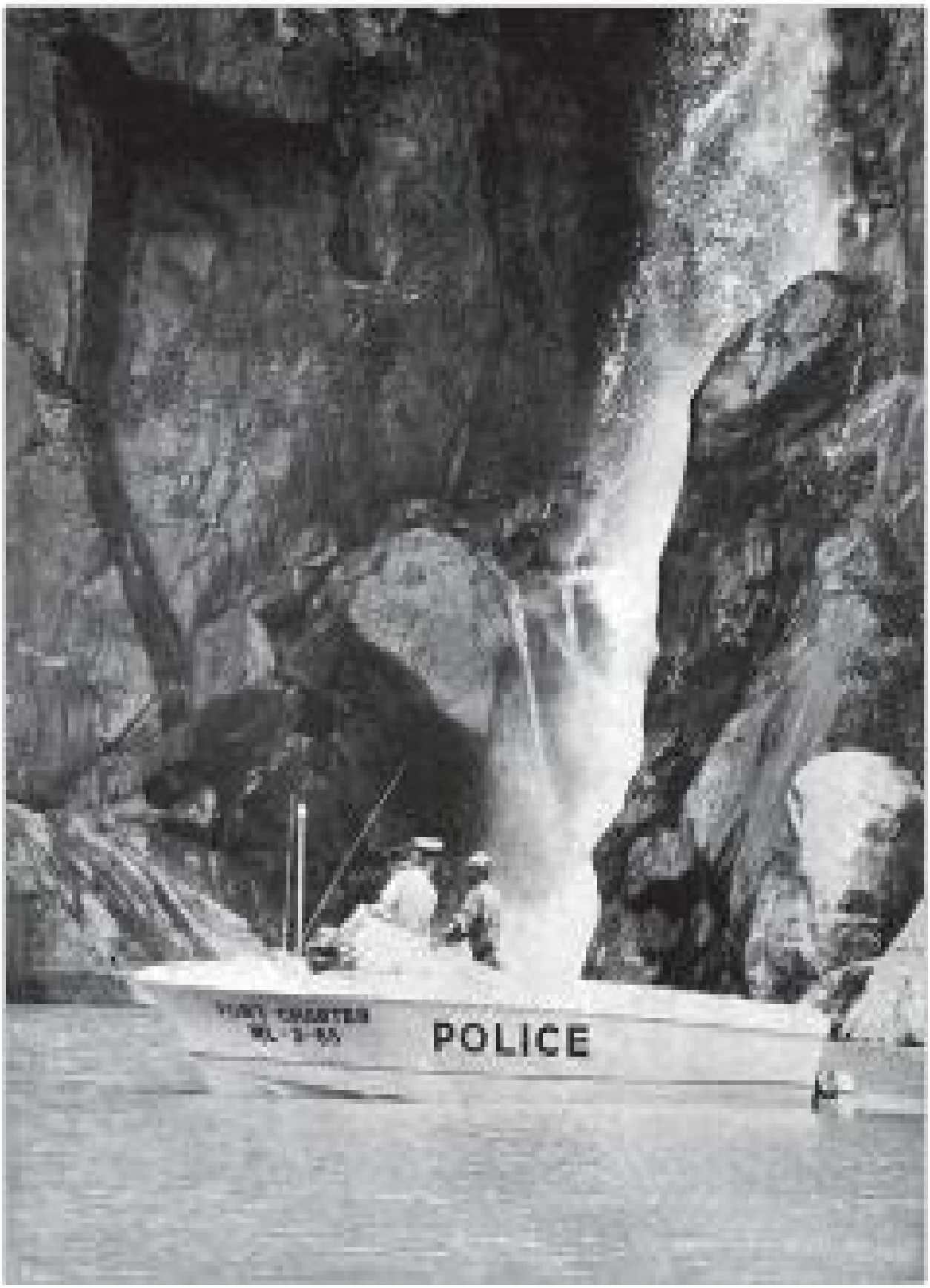
Operation Birch had other successes that morning. At Rivonia store, 35 kilometres north of Mangula, at 0745 hours Detective Sergeant Samundero arrested Nicholas Muzanenhamo, the security officer of ZAPU Section 1, who had deserted on the previous day. His AK rifle and a grenade were recovered nearby. Shortly afterward on the way to the store, Reserve Section Officer Chambers's PATU patrol encountered and arrested Lewis Chinyemba, the Section 2 deserter. He was carrying a grenade, having left his SKS rifle with Section 2.

Also that morning, a PATU stick went to St Cecelia's mission at Chitsungu to investigate the Monck Mason report. Spoor was located but lost due to rain. The tally for Operation Birch was, ZAPU: three killed and two arrested; the security forces: one killed and two wounded.

Friday, 23 January was fruitless with tracks being followed and lost. A distraction from Operations Birch and Teak threatened at 0140 hours on 24

January when a sentry of 2 (Independent) Company RRR reported he had seen five or six boats crossing below the tailrace of Kariba dam. The alarm was intensified in Kariba when firing and flares were seen farther down river at Chimba from an SAP camp. A black rhino had walked into the camp, leading the sentries to think they were under attack. 2 Brigade planned to fly 3 Commando if necessary to reinforce the 10RRR company deployed on border control. The SAS and an RAR company were placed on standby. The SAP realized their mistake and the crossing report soon proved to be false.

Saturday, 24 January brought results for JOC Birch. At 0630 hours Chambers's PATU stick detained Abel Sithole in Mityana farm compound, eight kilometres north of Doma. Sithole, the Golden City quartet singer of Section 1, had spent the night there with his commander, John Onias Kupeta, and Joseph Conrad Togaraseyi, ZAPU's deputy chief of personnel. Kupeta and Togaraseyi had gone to Kismet store, two kilometres south, where they were arrested by Colour Sergeant Antonwitz of a patrol led by Captain Garth Barrett, second in command of 1 Commando. One SKS and two AK rifles, three grenades, two blocks of explosives and 342 7.62mm rounds were found hidden close by. Abel Sithole then led Barrett 30 kilometres north to where the two remaining members of Section 1 were waiting near the Karoe–Hunyani river confluence. Clever Musa (alias Gutu) was shot dead by Barrett but Canaan Dube escaped despite being weakened by malaria. An RPD machine gun, one RPG bazooka, six packs, and other equipment were added to the Rhodesian collection. Interrogation of the captured men at last revealed to the Rhodesians the size and aims of the incursion.


POLICE

BSAP boat patrol at the Sanyati gorge, Kariba. Photo Blue and Old Gold

A ZAPU guerrilla.

That morning SB members interrogated the storekeeper at Chitsungu mission who confirmed that terrorists had visited his store. An RLI stick was flown in to cast for spoor without success until at 1100 hours, four kilometres to the southeast, Nigel Henson and his 4 Troop encountered two terrorists dressed in civilian clothes walking along the road toward Chitsungu. The two fled when challenged and Henson fired, killing Josiah Chirowodza, the commander of Section 3 and overall commander of the group. The other man escaped. Chirowodza had on his body a long list of food requirements indicating that he had been en route to buy provisions for sections 3 and 4. This implied that they were still together in the area. The tracks of the escapee showed he had joined two fellow insurgents who had been following some distance behind. Indeed, Phineas Tinau Majuru of ZAPU wrote in his diary: “The following day of disaster, Saturday morning 24.1.70 at about 10 a.m. or few minutes after, our beloved comrade in arms J. Chirowodza was cold bloodedly killed while moving along a road and dressed in civilian clothes [and] was shot without warning by blood thirsty whites. The other three comrades who were with him escaped uninjured. He had with him over £12/0/0 collected from fellow comrades who were with him to buy them food. So that day we had to shift deep into the mountains where some comrades left some of their offensive items, the portable boat and those of comrade Chirowodza. The other three who were with him had joined the rest of us. We put up near our dump.”[13] The post-mortem revealed Chirowodza had not eaten for 36 hours and very little before then.

The intensive patrolling continued. The Birch tally stood at security forces: one killed, two wounded; ZAPU: three killed and five captured.

Hopes were raised on Operation Teak that Saturday, 24 January when, at 0650 hours two local Africans from a village near Chisuma reported to the SAP camp that two armed terrorists, one carrying a Degtyaryov machine gun, had visited their village at 2300 hours the previous night asking for food. An SB team was flown in to investigate and a platoon deployed on a follow-up.

Tracks were lost and found and lost again all morning. It appeared that terrorists had visited more than one village in that area. PATU patrols were sent to assist the checking of villages. Eventually everything proved negative. Patrolling continued along the main road to the Matetsi river. Two tracks and several Degtyaryov rounds were found in the Fuller forest south of the road. Tracking continued.

At 1010 hours a report was received by the BSAP of two strange Africans on France farm, 20 kilometres southwest of Victoria Falls. Two army sticks taken there by two helicopters found two pairs of socks and shoes of the pattern used by ZAPU. Later they saw two armed men disappearing into thick bush some distance away. A follow-up was mounted and a combat-tracker team deployed. The tracks were lost ten kilometres farther on on Woodlands farm. Because there was no water in this area and the terrorists were expected to return to France farm, a platoon reinforced the two sticks.

Cross-graining patrols in the contact area southwest of Chisuma proved negative. A full AK magazine and tracks were discovered and followed near the Matetsi, west of the main road. PATU patrolled the verge of the operational area, searched kraals south of Chisuma, manned roadblocks on the main road and escorted vehicles through the operational area. They fruitlessly investigated a report of automatic fire heard at 0400 hours to the northeast of Waterford farm close to the railway line, 30 kilometres south of Victoria Falls. The BSAP Support Unit guarded Victoria Falls airport and patrolled and manned roadblocks in the border area. The SB and the ground coverage teams continued to seek information from local Africans. JOC Teak took some comfort from the evidence of the pressure on the ZAPU cadres who sought food and abandoned 15 ponchos, 14 packs, 13 trousers, ten camouflage tops and ten quarter-length raincoats.

On Sunday, 25 January an SB team with SAP support found spoor leading from a cave 15 kilometres south of Victoria Falls. A kilometre away to the northeast, another cave close to a waterhole contained an empty corn-beef tin from Chisuma store. At Victoria Falls three PATU sticks were deployed into the gorge opposite the Zambian power station after a man had been spotted there trying to cross the river. At 1608 hours they shot an insurgent attempting to escape. Lifelines fired from Zambia were found. The body was

recovered by helicopter for identification purposes. JOC Teak redeployed its troops and planned an intensive search of the gorge.

At 0645 hours on Monday, 26 January 1970 JOC Teak ordered a follow-up after an African reported to Chisuma that a terrorist had been in his village during the night. The tracks were eventually lost in the nearby villages around Chisuma due to the terrorists going barefoot.

At 0715 hours the BSAP announced that at 2230 hours on Sunday night, the rancher at Eldorado ranch, ten kilometres northeast of Pandamatenga, had arrested two terrorists at the point of his shotgun. He had done so after his workers reported the men were asking for food. The police backtracked to find two AK rifles and other equipment. Interrogation yielded the whereabouts of a 30-hour-old resting place for seven men two kilometres south of Dibangombie railway siding and ten kilometres south of the airport. An RAR platoon and a combat-tracker team were dispatched at 1700 hours to follow tracks found there.

JOC Teak maintained its intensive patrolling and imposed night curfews in the affected areas. The next day, 27 January, a patrol uncovered a resting place for a single terrorist close to a Chisuma village. It contained explosives and ammunition. An ambush was mounted on it. At 1430 hours near Kazungula a ground coverage detail was told that earlier, at 1100 hours, two strange Africans had unsuccessfully asked villagers for food and means to cross to Zambia. An RAR platoon and a combat-tracker team were deployed and found tracks heading west toward Botswana and a sketch of the river and roads in the area.

JOC Teak concluded that there were 13 terrorists outstanding with seven heading southwest between the Matetsi river and Pandamatenga, two near the Zambezi river, moving west toward Kazungula and four still in the Chisuma area. The JOC understood they were short of food but were still well-armed with the seven carrying two Degtyaryov machine guns, three AK and two SKS rifles and 100 rounds per man; the others had five AK rifles and an RPD machine gun. The JOC deployed its forces accordingly, including dispatching SAP sticks to the Botswanan border to act as stops. The searching continued on 28 January 1970 without result. On Operation Birch the tracking of the three escapees from Henson’s contact had resulted in the location of their

base camp on Sunday, 25 January. It was five kilometres to the southeast of the contact at the mouth of a re-entrant in the escarpment, parallel to Dande river valley. There, the three fugitives had met the other seven and together they had left in the early hours, leaving behind a bandolier, a few rounds of 7.62mm ammunition and a pair of figure-of-8 soled boots. The trackers followed the spoor up the re-entrant. Their progress, however, was slowed by the dense vegetation and by the eight ambush positions that the terrorists had left to hold up the pursuit. Stop groups were positioned ahead and ambushes were laid for the night of 25–26 January. A sky-shout and leaflet drop that night by the air force proved fruitless.

Territorial officers of the Royal Rhodesia Regiment in their operations room, Binga base camp, 1970. Collection Rhodesian Services Association Rhodesia Regiment book project © J.A.G. Fraser

An RLI stick is uplifted after an action in the Zambezi valley. Source Ian Dixon

An RLI patrol sweeps along the Zambezi valley floor in extended line.

The Rhodesian effort was reinforced that day by the South African army signals interception units, R and V troops, brought in to monitor ZAPU radio transmissions to and from Lusaka. It is not recorded whether they intercepted the fugitives' report to Lusaka at noon the next day.

That day, Monday, 26 January, the trackers reached a recently vacated ten-man base camp farther up the re-entrant at 0900 hours. It contained an inflatable boat, two pairs of ZAPU boxer shorts, an AK, an SKS and a Winchester 30.06 sporting rifle, an RPG-2 launcher, six RPG projectiles, 17 blocks of explosives and 1,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition. With both ends of the re-entrant sealed off, a Trojan light aircraft fired rockets at 1130 hours into likely ambush and hiding positions without result. A sweep followed with the stop groups moving north to meet the tracking teams but no contact resulted. Subsequent interrogation revealed that the ZAPU men had escaped during the early hours of the morning, evading the stop groups by taking a very steep and difficult route. Their tracks were not found. An intensive but fruitless search for sections 3 and 4 covered a large area, concentrating on the last general line of movement of the terrorists. Although the JOC was still located at Mangula, operations were now being directed largely from a tactical headquarters at Sipolilo.

On Tuesday, 27 January Canaan Dube, the deputy commander of Section 1, entered Mukamba farm compound, 29 kilometres northeast of Mangula, and sent a local youth to buy goods for him. The storeman reported Dube's presence to the BSAP and Mansill's PATU stick captured him in the compound. His AK rifle was recovered on the following day from the nearby bush. This meant that all of sections 1 and 2 had been killed or captured except for Timothy Moyo, the medical officer of Section 2. He would be caught by BSAP Sergeant Chibanda on 13 February 1970 near Chigwadi store in the Sipolilo area. The Birch tally stood at five ZAPU killed and six captured. The ground coverage units continued to seek intelligence while the army and PATU continued cross-graining patrols and ambushes.

At 0630 hours on Wednesday morning, 28 January, called in by the RLI, the Alouette III of Flight Lieutenant Hugh Slatter attacked a suspected terrorist base in the riverbed of the re-entrant, firing 220 MAG rounds. Nothing was found. Heavy rain made tracking difficult.

A resting place was found the next day but the rain ruled out tracking. The hungry ZAPU quarry managed to kill “a small animal”. But the patrolling northeast of Mangula continued.

At 0858 hours on Thursday, 29 January Roger Mavusa Ndhlovu, a local recruit from Chisuma, and Pray Totsi Mpofu, an ex-batman of the SAP, were captured when seeking food from a border-fence guard 17 kilometres northwest of Pandamatenga. They reported that two of their companions were hiding nearby. Three helicopters flew a combat-tracker team and RAR personnel to follow the tracks. RAR, PATU and SAP stop groups were placed to intercept the fugitives. The Teak tally was security forces: one killed, six wounded; ZAPU: five killed, five captured and the fate of eleven still unknown.

Ian Smith warned Zambia yet again of Rhodesian retaliation if she continued to harbour terrorists. Responding on Friday, 30 January the Zambian minister of home affairs, Lewis Changufu, described the action within Rhodesia as a “direct result of the oppression exercised on the majority of people in Rhodesia”. Proclaiming Zambia as a “peace-loving nation dedicated to political freedom and peaceful development”, he noted that, although Zambians had suffered constant aggression from the white minority regimes, they had avoided raising the tension in the region.

A sweep of the Kazuma depression, 21 kilometres northwest of Pandamatenga, was unrewarding but two captured men, Hlatshwayo Ndhlovu (alias Kelley Ndhlovu) and Armstrong Hlabangama, the Cuban-trained saboteur who had blown up the railway line at Mubiya siding, guided the security forces to their cache seven kilometres northwest of Victoria Falls airport. It held four AK and five SKS rifles, 3,423 bullets, and clothing. The BSAP detained Chisuma locals who had assisted terrorists. Patrolling continued there and along the Zambezi and the Botswanan border. For its part the Botswanan police mobile unit arrested Obert Mpofu, the leader of the five attackers of the airport and the railway line.

On Saturday, 31 January JOC Teak had the ZAPU group's leader, Roger Ndlovu, confirm his group's crossing point ten kilometres southeast of Victoria Falls. Mabena Latshi, an arrested local from the Sibode area, admitted to giving food on the night of 18 January to the three terrorists who were killed by the combat-tracker team on 21 January. At Kazungula, at 1600 hours, a local betrayed the presence of three strangers to B Company 1RAR. An immediate follow-up led to an exchange of fire and the surrender of George Moyo, the deputy leader, Leonard Mlotshwa and John Dube. All three had deserted the main group on the night of 28 January to make their way to Botswana. They were armed with two AK rifles, four loaded magazines, one Ceska pistol, three RGD and two F1 grenades plus five fuses. They had between them £42, some South African currency and Rhodesian silver. The Teak casualties to date were security forces: one killed, six wounded; ZAPU: five killed, eight captured and eight outstanding, with three arrested in Botswana.

In northern Mashonaland success eluded JOC Birch until Saturday evening, 31 January, when the eleven outstanding ZAPU men were by then suffering acutely from lack of food. At 2100 hours they sent Shepherd Dombodevuku, the deputy commander of Section 3, and Keas Shumba, the political commissar of Section 4, to obtain food from a kraal in the Bakasa area in the escarpment east of the Dande river. The kraal headman, Kufandarore, recognized Dombodzvuku and Shumba as insurgents and, having arranged food for them, mustered 12 locals who seized and tied them to posts in the kraal. Kufandarore was stripping them of a Ceska pistol and £3/4/1 when two insurgents, hidden in the dark, fired three shots at him. Kufandarore and his supporters fled, leaving their attackers to release Dombodzvuku and Shumba. Undeterred, Kufandarore borrowed a tractor from a neighbour and drove to the nearest telephone to report the incident to the BSAP at Sipolilo.

13 and 14 Troops 3 Commando 1RLI began the follow-up at 0830 hours on Sunday, 1 February 1970, led by the police tracker dog, Brutus. Despite finding five resting places and one ambush position, progress was rapid. At 1030 hours the tracks were so fresh that Brutus was released. Fifteen minutes later he barked and was shot dead. After a lengthy exchange of fire, Renias Mapolisa of Section 4 was killed. He and Aaron Dzworiro, the security officer of Section 4, both RPD gunners, had been lying in ambush while their

group rested 50 metres away. Dzoworiro had fallen asleep and was woken by the barking of Brutus. Abandoning his weapon, he fled. The haul from the contact area was impressive: two RPD machine guns, an AK rifle, eleven AK magazines, 2,250 7.62mm rounds, an RPG-2 launcher, two RPG projectiles, two British Mills 36 and two Soviet RDG grenades, seven detonators, a 200-gram TNT block, two 1:250,000 maps of Mtoko and Mangula, a damaged Morse transmitter of the Soviet-trained Pious Kuuya of Section 3 and three packs containing equipment. The radio had been sabotaged to prevent the Rhodesians discovering the frequencies used. A later search produced three packs. Three sets of tracks led eastward but were later washed out by rain. At 1808 hours a member of Section 3, Phineas Tinau Majuru, the ZAPU director of operations, surrendered to Corporal Denis Croukamp and his stop group some 2,000 metres northwest of the contact area. Majuru had lost the group and had decided to return to Lusaka to report. Croukamp took off him an SKS rifle, his diary and the 18-page hand-written document given to him by James Chikerema, the external director of ZAPU, which revealed the history and intentions of the incursion. The JOC placed a cordon around the contact area but achieved nothing as three ZAPU insurgents walked through a police ambush unharmed.

At 0500 hours on Monday, 2 February, however, Aaron Dzworiro of Section 4 was captured at a Police Reserve roadblock at Camperdown store, 13 kilometres north of Sipolilo. This arrest and the disappearance of the five outstanding men in the vastness of the Wankie area and the news of arrests of ZAPU fugitives in Botswana encouraged the Rhodesian forces to contemplate winding up operations Birch and Teak.

Despite the clear failure of both incursions, James Chikerema was undeterred. He ordered the launching of the long-planned recruiting and training of locals in the Kezi area, south of Bulawayo and Joshua Nkomo’s home territory. John Dube, ZAPU’s deputy chief of operations and a Nickel veteran, and Roma Vilivilli Nyati, ZAPU’s chief political commissar, briefed a seven-man group before they were issued with the usual range of weapons and equipment. The group comprised Phillimon Mabuza Ncube, the commander; Johnson (alias John alias Enock) Mkwananzi, the deputy commander; Zephaniah Nyati, the commissar; Crispen (alias Sipo Sepho) Dhlodhlo, the medical orderly; Edward Tshuma; Cuthbert Ndhlovu; and Petros Sikoboli

Maposa (alias Harry Maposa).

Escorted by two ZAPU reconnaissance members, the seven were ferried across to Rhodesia near Chete island. Once on shore, they marched southeastward toward the Chizarira range before veering due south over the range and into the Mzolo forest area in northern Lupane. Their presence would only be detected in April 1970 and Operation Granite initiated.

JOC Birch concentrated on the Mvuradona mountains because interrogation revealed that the destinations for sections 3 and 4 were the Mount Darwin and Mtoko areas. Accordingly, the JOC moved to Sipolilo on Wednesday, 4 February 1970. The search, however, was fruitless. At 1030 hours Godfrey Nhunzvi, leader of Section 4, secured mielie meal from a kraal in the Bakasa area in the escarpment east of the Dande river. Inviting a local man to join him for training, he showed him a pistol and said his group was camping near the Dande–Duwara confluence. He left at 1210 hours carrying peanuts, the mielie meal and a cooking tin. The local reported the incident and a follow-up ensued. Although Nhunzvi was seen some 500 metres from the kraal, he fled and his tracks were lost in the thick bush. He left behind a small fire, the tin, the mielie meal and a pair of veldskoen boots. He reappeared at a nearby kraal at 0500 hours the next day, 5 February, and at pistol point obtained a box of matches and demanded food. While food was being fetched for him, he disappeared into the bush. Trackers and a dog subsequently followed him for approximately nine kilometres but lost his spoor in rough ground. Despite intensive ground coverage, no further sightings were reported. The Rhodesian security forces did, however, find the ZAPU food caches along their line of march and mounted ambushes on them.

For the next five days, no trace of the terrorists was found and JOC Birch requested that the operation be called off. This was denied but on Tuesday, 10 February the JOC's force level was reduced to one helicopter, 3 Commando 1RLI, BSAP ground coverage units and five PATU sticks.

The problem confronting JOC Teak remained that five ZAPU cadres were at large in 2,000 square kilometres of featureless, thickly wooded terrain with adequate water due to the continuing rain. What was found, at 1600 hours on Sunday, 8 February, 30 metres from the river's edge at the crossing point, was an arms cache wedged between trees and covered with rocks. It

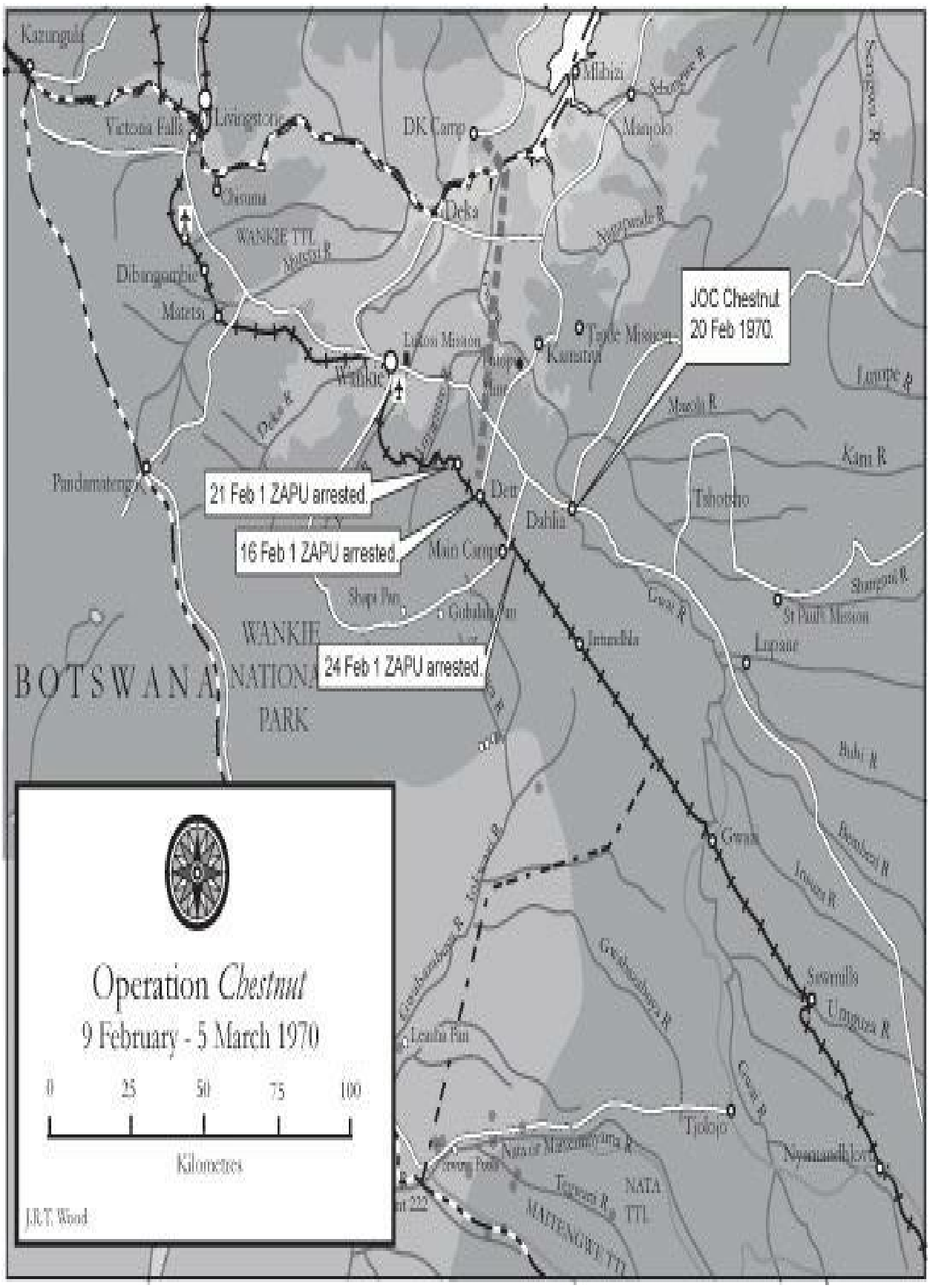
contained five M25 sub-machine guns, 48 magazines, three M95 Steyr bolt-action rifles, five M1943 Czech carbines, seven cleaning kits, 14 oil bottles, nine magazine pouches, 390 7.62mm long-rimmed rounds in clips and 13 boxes with 40 9mm rounds for the M25 sub-machine guns. The weapons were heavily greased.

The lack of further success led to agreement on Wednesday, 11 February that JOC Teak should close at 0600 hours on Friday, 13 February. C Company 1RAR returned to Methuen barracks on 12 February. The whereabouts of the five Teak survivors was unknown. It was thought that three had returned to Zambia and that Enock Nkomo Matenjwa and Josias Ndhlovu were in the Lupane area. In the event, Matenjwa found employment as a domestic servant with a white family in the Famona suburb of Bulawayo and Ndhlovu became a gardener/messenger with a Bulawayo firm. They would be arrested together three years later on 5 January 1973 at a beerhall in Bulawayo.

What was not yet known was that on Monday, 9 February ZAPU challenged the Rhodesian forces further by sending in another small team. Ordered to subvert the Lupane Tribal Trust Land, seven men from their camp at DK mine, guided by three members of the reconnaissance unit, crossed the Zambezi at the Msuna river mouth ten kilometres upstream of the Gwai–Zambezi confluence. When they were discovered Operation Chestnut would be mounted.

At 1130 hours on Tuesday, 10 February one Birch survivor surfaced. Freddy Msano (alias Freddy Tirivanhu, alias Chinodakufa) of Section 3, carrying an AK rifle, purchased two chickens from the camp of Tommy Mitton, a coloured Rhodesian crocodile hunter, at the Angwa–Hunyani river confluence in Mozambique. Tirivanhu said he had come from Rhodesia where he had been fighting the security forces. He added that his companions were dying or had died of hunger. When he left he headed for Chutla to the east and Mitton reported the incident to the Portuguese authorities at Zumbo. On the next day, 11 February, the Portuguese arrested Tirivanhu in Chief Nhanchenge's area near the Hunyani river in Mozambique. He was flown to Sipolilo where he explained to his interrogators that he had lost contact with the remainder of sections 3 and 4 at the time of the contact on 1 February. He had made his way north, following the Dande river to the Hunyani and into

Mozambique.


Kazungula
Victoria Falls
Livingstone
Mlibizi
DK Camp
Mapoko
Deka
Dibungambe
Mateti
WANKIE TTL
Wankie
Dete
Pandamatenga
JOC Chestnut
20 Feb 1970.
21 Feb 1 ZAPU arrested.
16 Feb 1 ZAPU arrested.
24 Feb 1 ZAPU arrested.
Main Camp
Dett
Dahlia
Tshotsho
Kamativi
Kami R
Lupane
St Paul's Mission
Inyathi
Gwaai R
Shangani R
Hubi R
Gwanda
Insiza R
Filabusi
Umguza R
Tjolotjo
Nyamandhlovu
Crewe Pond
NATA TTL
MATSENGARI TTL
BOTSWANA NATIONAL PARK
Operation Chestnut
9 February - 5 March 1970
0 25 50 75 100
Kilometres
J.R.T. Wood

JOC Birch kept 3 Commando and D Company 1RAR scouring the area below the escarpment. The RLI suffered losses that day when Sergeant K. Reynolds was killed and Trooper Watson was wounded by a 32Z rifle grenade exploding when they were loading trucks at Sipolilo police station.

Early on Friday, 13 February Timothy Moyo, the medical officer of Section 2, asked for food at a kraal near Chigwadi store, northwest of Sipolilo. His presence was reported to BSAP ground coverage personnel who arrested him at 0630 hours. His AK rifle and Ceska pistol were found in the kraal.

On Sunday, 15 February two unarmed terrorists, believed to be Shepherd Dombodzuku and Pious Kuuya, dressed in camouflage uniforms, asked for food at a kraal near Bunu store on the Angwa river near the Mozambican border. The kraal headman refused to give them anything so they left but later in the day stole mielies from some lands nearby. After another theft the next day, their presence was reported. A follow-up and sweeps over the next few days were fruitless despite the involvement of Portuguese troops.

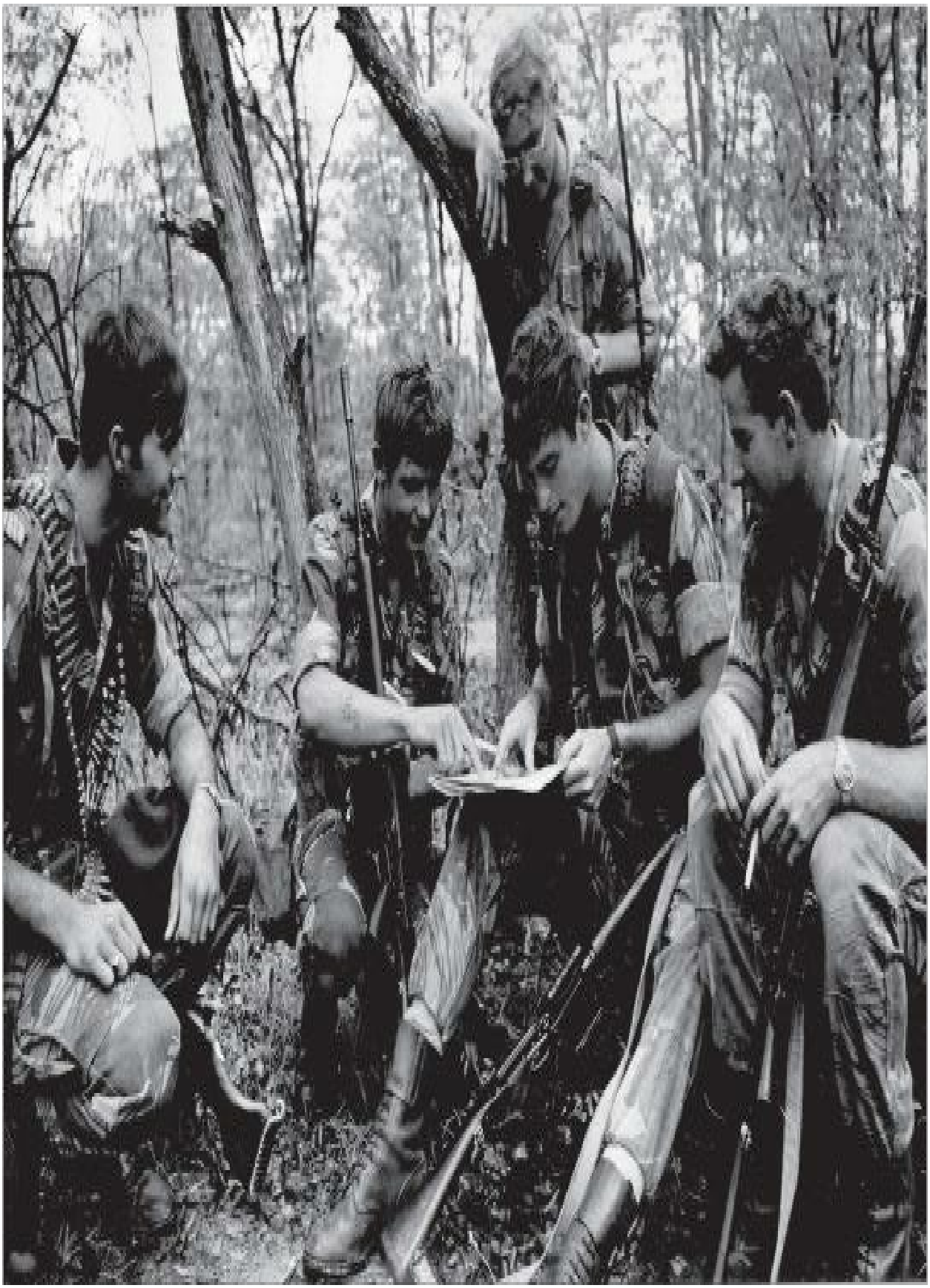
At 1200 hours on 18 February RAR troops, keeping guard at the original Birch crossing point, saw two men dressed in camouflage uniforms on the Rhodesian bank of the Zambezi some 1,000 yards to their west. At 1815 hours a boat put out from the Zambian bank, collected these two and returned to Zambia. It was concluded that they were a reconnaissance party. An attempt was planned to use a captured man, Dzworiro, as a decoy to attract the recovery boat and its crew. The Birch tally was security forces: one killed, two wounded; ZAPU: six killed, ten captured and six outstanding.

In northern Matabeleland the undetected seven-man Granite incursion had been avoiding human contact in the Mzolo forest. On 15 February they camped northeast of the game fence in the south of the Manjolo Tribal Trust Land and their commander, Ncube, sent Ndhlovu, Nyati, Tshuma and Maposa eastward to look for food and water. They found water in a small stream near the game fence but no food. On 16 February Ncube, Nyati, Tshuma and Maposa departed southeastward and that night stole maize from fields near kraals. Having slept there, they attempted to return to their base camp but had to search for it for three days. In the process they met their first

local African who directed them to water near the Mzolo fly gate. When they found their camp Mkwananzi, Dhlodhlo and Ndhlovu had gone, leaving behind a small quantity of ammunition and two Soviet TMD-B wooden-cased landmines. After waiting a day for the absentees, on 20 February, the four continued the march south.

After waiting for the four in vain, Mkwananzi, Dhlodhlo and Ndhlovu abandoned their mission and left for Botswana. Mkwananzi and Ndhlovu went ahead of Dhlodhlo because he was hampered by a leg injury. He reached Botswana on 3 April 1970 near Kasane where the Botswanan police arrested him. Before then, in the Wankie game reserve, as Ndhlovu was ill and exhausted, Mkwananzi left him to search in vain for food and water. On his return, Mkwananzi could not find Ndhlovu and eventually reached Botswana, near Tamafupe, on 12 April 1970 in poor physical condition. It was thought Ndhlovu succumbed to exhaustion.

At 2115 hours on Thursday, 19 February the catalyst for the launching of Operation Chestnut was the arrest at Dett, near Wankie, of Cuban-trained Michael Ncube (alias Ndende, alias Mpisis). He was armed with two RGD5 grenades. He revealed his group comprised Mbojeni Mlilo Msimanga, the Cuban-trained commander; Josiah Nkomo (alias Ndevu Nkomo), the Tanzanian-trained deputy commander; Soviet-trained Shadreck Muraboni Ngwenya (alias Shadreck Peter Ngwenya); Cuban-trained Amos Mtoniselwa Ndhlovu; and Tanzanian-trained Nkosi Bhapile Ndhlovu and Pius Mlilo. Ncube added that they were dressed in camouflage uniforms but were carrying civilian clothes and were wearing boots with defaced figure-of-8 soles. They were armed with five AK and SKS rifles having ditched their RPD machine gun and RPG launcher.



An RLI patrol ‘takes five’ to study the map, Zambezi valley.

Sergeant Eddie Fouché, 10 Troop 2 Commando 1 RLI, on operations in Mozambique's Tete Province.

Immediately on Friday, 20 February PATU, SB and BSAP Support Unit personnel were deployed, roadblocks were established and JOC Chestnut was established at Dahlia at 1500 hours with C Company 1RAR and an SAP helicopter on strength. From Ncube the JOC learned that the group's aim was to subvert Lupane. SB personnel and half of 8 Platoon C Company visited the village where locals had been feeding the group. They found the spoor of two men and shortly two packs, two water bottles, two pairs of defaced figure-of-8 boots, two pairs of camouflage trousers, 994 7.62mm and 116 .38in rounds, one TMD-B wooden-box landmine containing a 200-gram block of TNT, one British Mills 36 grenade and one red lifejacket.

On Saturday, 21 February the SB arrested Pius Mlilo at Mambanje siding northwest of Dett. He was unarmed and wearing civilian clothes. Mlilo revealed that Nkosi Bhapile Ndhlovu, Amos Mtoniselwa Ndhlovu and Shadreck Muraboni Ngwenya had set off for Tjolotjo but had returned to Mambanje area seeking food on 19 February, still intending to go to Tjolotjo. On 23 February the SB took Ncube and Mlilo, an armed escort and a tracker dog to search for the abandoned RPD machine gun north of a kraal at Mambanje. Nothing was found. Interrogation of the locals led SB to uncover, 1,700 metres away, two AK rifles, eight full AK magazines, a water bottle, a compass, a pair of binoculars, two camouflage jackets and a quantity of other clothing. It transpired that the kraal occupant had prevented his wife from reporting the presence of terrorists.

On 27 February 1970 at 0615 hours a patrol at the road–rail crossing to Wankie main camp captured the emaciated and dehydrated Mbojeni Mlilo Msimanga, the commander of the ZAPU group. He was carrying South African rands because ZAPU understood that they would be accepted by any Rhodesian store. He explained that the group had split into two groups of three and would regroup in the Mpindo area of Tjolotjo at the kraal of a contact man, Amos Scorpion Ndhlovu. The next day, 28 February 1970, a

search of the Chestnut crossing point uncovered two fully loaded AK magazines in gameskin pouches.

Trooper Terry Tribe, 8 Troop 2 Commando 1 RLI, checks out his night scope in preparation for a night ambush in the Mukumbura area. He is wearing a Portuguese combat cap.

On Sunday, 1 March 1970, on the eve of Rhodesia becoming a republic, the RRAF lost its Royal designation, as did the Royal Rhodesia Regiment. The air force took the opportunity to rename the ranks of pilot officer and flying officer ‘air sub-lieutenant’ and ‘air lieutenant’ respectively. Badges were also changed to remove the crowns which signified the royal connection.

On Sunday, 1 March Chikerema, whose strategy and leadership was generating a schism with ZAPU’s senior and junior ranks, chose to launch a hit-and-run attack on Kariba airfield, perhaps in protest to Rhodesia’s change of status. He sent a six-man unit across the Zambezi at Nyamuomba farm at the northern mouth of the Kariba gorge. As with the other recent incursions, it would take the Rhodesians by surprise but achieve little. The Rhodesians would designate their pursuit of this unit Operation Pluto.

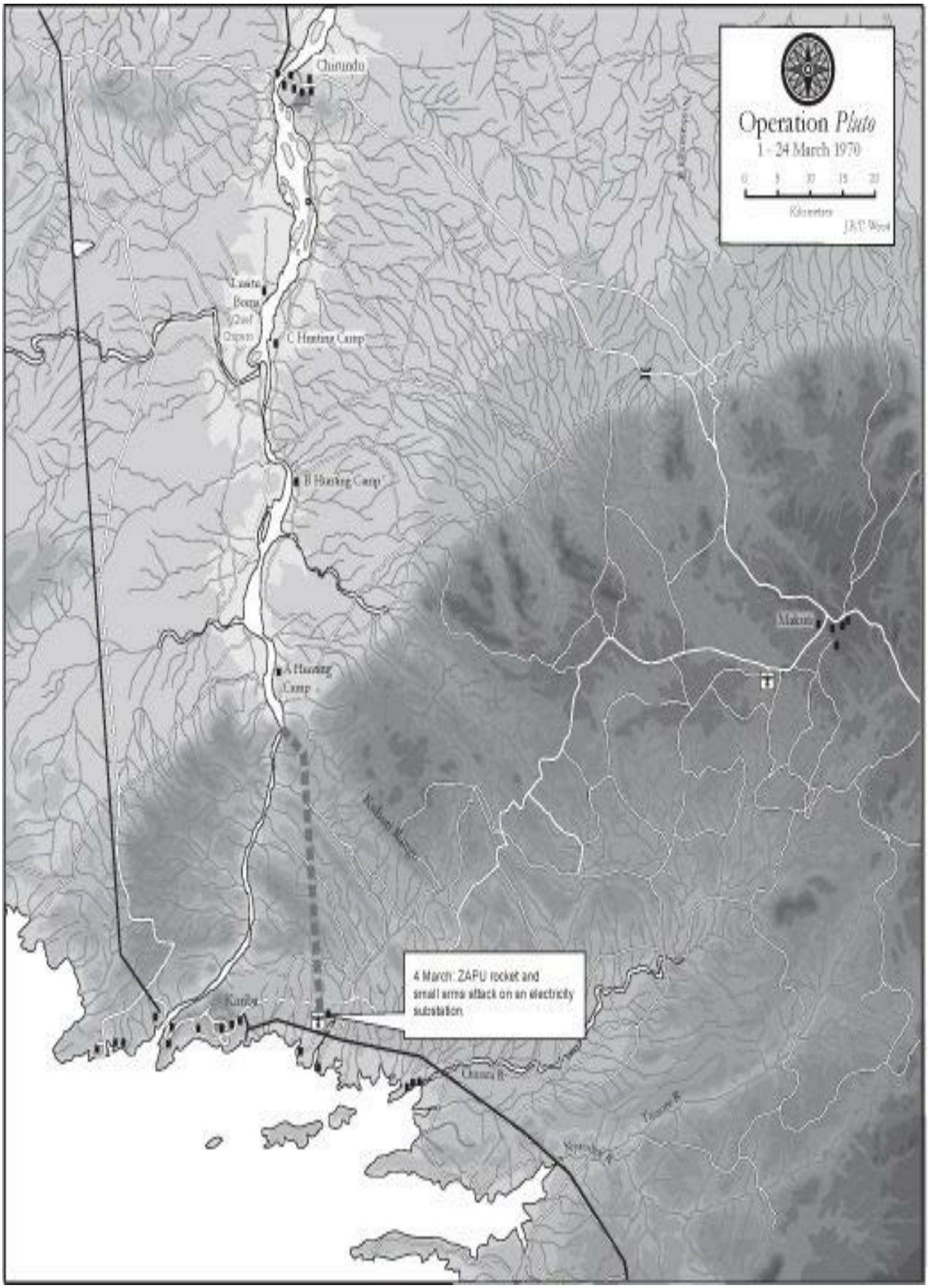
At Kariba airfield at 2240 hours on Wednesday, 4 March a building housing an electricity transmitter close to the Kariba–Makuti road was hit by two RPG rockets and strafed by automatic rifle fire. The rockets, however, were unprimed and did not explode and the 77 rifle bullets did no more that pit the walls of the building. Perhaps conscious of the Rhodesian air force camp 150 metres away, the ZAPU attackers dropped a few pamphlets and a ZAPU flag and disappeared into the night. The pamphlets read: “To all whites, come out of that country because I have started to fulfil the dreams of my grandfather Munhumutapa showed me of freeing this country. When I cut of [sic] Smith’s head I shall call you back. Keep alive. Get out of Zimbabwe for this moment. Go to England, this flag must replace Smith’s very soon. Says Mukundi.” Another read: “Kariba is our target for testing our guns. Whites go out of the battle field.”

A follow-up was mounted at first light but the ZAPU unit had an eight-hour start. The spoor of ten men was followed for three days and then lost. Despite

an intensive search and extensive use of aircraft in reconnaissance and the movement of troops, the ZAPU unit had hit and run back to Zambia, fulfilling Chikerema's new strategy. All that was found was a resting place containing a pair of figure-of-8 boots, a few empty tins, a camouflage cap and seven 7.62mm pistol rounds. After vigorous but fruitless searches, JOC Pluto closed on 24 March.

Also, after more than two weeks without any development, despite further effort, JOC Birch closed at 1030 hours that day, 5 March 1970. Its final tally was: Trooper Anthony Brading and Brutus, the police dog, killed; ZAPU: seven killed, 14 captured and one escaped. The four ZAPU sections had failed totally in achieving their objectives. The Rhodesians had collected eleven AK and four SKS rifles, a Winchester 30-06 sporting rifle, 42 AK magazines and 6,742 7.62mm medium rounds, four RPD machine guns, four Cseka M27 pistols and seven magazines, 103 7.65mm pistol rounds, a P38 pistol, four RPG rocket launchers, 21 RPG-2 projectiles and 21 propellants, eleven Mills 36 grenades, eleven American incendiary and ten Soviet RGD5 grenades, seven 200- and 12 400-gram slabs of Trotyl explosive, 30 sticks of Soviet nitrate-based explosive, 94 detonators, one Drake detonator exploder and 130 feet of fuse.

Then, on 21 March 1970, in Mukumbura township on the Mozambican border, BSAP constables Fambirayi and Matsenhura arrested the two remaining members of Section 4, Elias Moyo and Keyas Shumba, who had walked the length of the border from their original crossing point. Their companion, Godfrey Nhunzvi, avoided capture and somehow reached Botswana where he claimed political asylum in May 1971. On 24 March 1970 the Portuguese informed the Rhodesians that Shepherd Dombodzvuku and Godfrey Gorima had been captured, and Phineas Kuuya, the radio operator, had been killed in a contact in Mozambique. Chestnut also closed on 5 March with one ZAPU member outstanding, three captured and three reaching Botswana. The last small ZAPU team, however, was, as yet, undetected.

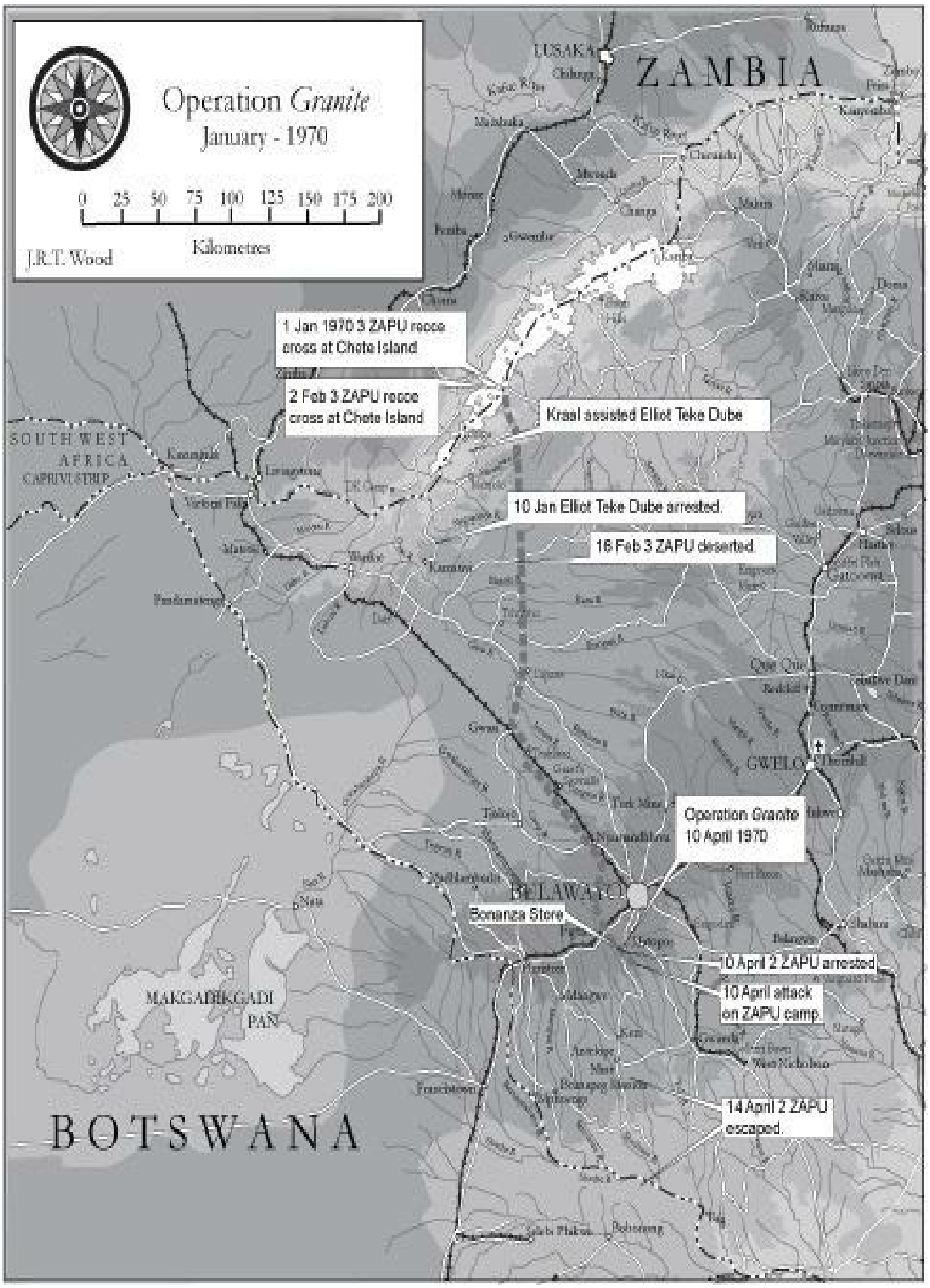

Operation *Pluto*
1 - 24 March 1970
Kilometers
J.R.T. Wood
Chirundu
Lusaka
Beira
Salisbury
C Hunting Camp
B Hunting Camp
A Hunting Camp
Makuti
Kariba
4 March: ZAPU rocket and small arms attack on an electricity substation

12 Email from Nigel Henson, 6 December 2010.

13 British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, Rhodesian Army Association Papers, Box 585, Extracts from the Diary of Phineas Tinau Majuru, circulated on 5 February

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO:

ZAPU’S LAST HURRAH: OPERATION GRANITE, MARCH–APRIL 1970


Operation *Granite*
January - 1970
0 25 50 75 100 125 150 175 200
Kilometres
J.R.T. Wood
LUSAKA
ZAMBIA
1 Jan 1970 3 ZAPU recce cross at Chote Island
2 Feb 3 ZAPU recce cross at Chote Island
Kraal assisted Elliot Teke Dube
10 Jan Elliot Teke Dube arrested.
16 Feb 3 ZAPU deserted.
SOUTH WEST AFRICA
CAPRIVI STRIP
GWELO
Operation Granite 10 April 1970
BULAWAYO
Bonanza Store
10 April 2 ZAPU arrested
10 April attack on ZAPU camp.
14 April 2 ZAPU escaped.
MAKGADIKGADI PAN
BOTSWANA

The Granite four-man group led by Phillimon Mabuza Ncube had walked through the Mzolo and Lupane tribal trust lands, crossing the Shangani river in the first days of March 1970. On Friday, 13 March two of them entered a kraal, some eleven kilometres north of Lupane village, in search of food. They told the kraal-dwellers that they had come to buy pigs, goats and chickens and were waiting for the return of a friend who had gone to collect spares for their vehicle which had broken down. They bought a goat for Rh$4 and killed and ate it on their return to their base camp east of the kraal. The purchase of the goat was reported to the BSAP at Lupane but, as there were genuine stock buyers in the area, the report was ignored. The next day, 14 March, Ncube's group continued their march, skirting the northern edge of Lupane village and heading south through the sparsely inhabited country. They drank from the Bubi river some five kilometres southwest of Lupane.

Early on 15 March they crossed the main Bulawayo–Victoria Falls road and followed the Gwai river south to the Gwai–Msuza farming area, west of the Gwai river some 34 miles south of Lupane. Here they made contact with an elderly African who gave them directions to a nearby store. Nyati and Tshuma changed into civilian clothing and went to the Tshayamatole store to buy four equal amounts of tinned food, soap and cigarettes plus a knife and a small amount of mielie meal. Their appearance roused the storekeeper's suspicions but not sufficiently for him to make a report. The journey southward was resumed. They avoided Gwai village and camped in the bush to the east of Gwai siding. On the morning of 20 March they reached the railway line and crossed it between Matupula and Teakland sidings and camped for the night west of Teakland. On 21 March Nyati and Tshuma, dressed in civilian clothes, bought supplies from the white operator of the sawmill canteen at Teakland. They returned there on Monday, 23 March to buy more food and then set off southeast, walking parallel to the railway line. They bought more supplies from P.B. Dike's store at Grant's siding and continued southeast, crossing the Umgusa river. On Easter Monday, 30 March, two of them dressed in civilian clothes bought four loaves of bread, four tins of syrup and cigarettes from Katina store and butchery without the owner, Carel Gustav Bezuidenhout, suspecting anything. Following the railway line southeastward, they passed Nyamandhlovu village where,

noticing the lights of Bulawayo, they swung away from the railway line to pass westward of the city. They walked between Khami prison and Hyde Park estates, living off mielies stolen from lands en route. On 3 April they camped near Pendennis farm, just west of the Umkwaseze river and 16 kilometres west of Khami. On two separate occasions on 4 April Nyati Tshuma, wearing civilian clothes, purchased provisions at the Umkwaseze store 30 kilometres from Bulawayo on the Solusi mission road. Leaving there, the group walked in a southerly direction, drew water from a dam and then went southeastward toward the Matopos.

On 5 April, nine kilometres after the dam, they encountered a cattle herd. Two of the party, dressed in camouflage clothing, approached the herdsman and when asked who they were told him they were terrorists who required food and water. He supplied a small quantity of mielie meal and directed them to water. They continued southeastward, crossing the Figtree–Bulawayo road and the railway line to Botswana and camped for the night. On 6 April they crossed the Matopos road two kilometres west of Matopos village to establish a base close to the northern boundary of the Matopos national park. On the morning of 7 April Ncube and Edward Tshuma went to Bonanza store, five kilometres southwest of the Matopos police station. En route they encountered an African constable on the road and asked him for directions. At Bonanza store they bought supplies in four lots of four and immediately aroused the suspicions of the owner, Mrs Francina Hendrina Grobler. She reported to a passing BSAP patrol officer but he was en route to an accident. By the time he returned, Ncube and Tshuma had already left.

On 8 April the four men, having moved twice, finally established a base camp ten kilometres south of Matopos village. On 10 April Zephaniah Nyati and Edward Tshuma returned to Bonanza store and bought more supplies. Mrs Grobler recognized Tshuma and alerted the BSAP. The response was the arrest at 0950 hours of Nyati and Tshuma near Calderwood farm on the Kezi road. Both men were wearing civilian clothes and were armed with two Tokarev pistols and three loaded magazines. JOC Granite was formed at Matopos police station with A Company 1RAR, four PATU sticks, light aircraft and a helicopter under command. One of the captured men guided the troops to the base camp but Ncube and Harry Maposa saw them coming and fled, running eastward, each carrying an AK rifle and one magazine. The

camp contained two AK-47 rifles, one RPG-2, two Tokarev pistols, seven Mills 36 and five RGD5 grenades, 1,200 rounds of 7.62 ammunition, five anti-personnel mines, 27 detonators, ten 75- and four 200-gram slabs of TNT and four packs. Police dogs picked up the scent of the two fugitives but lost it after a short distance on the smooth face on a granite koppie.

On 14 April the Kezi farming area and the Matopos Tribal Trust Land were searched, roadblocks were established and railway trains searched. The follow-up was reinforced by E Company and the Mortar Platoon 1RAR.

At 0700 hours on 14 April, leaving Maposa hidden in a nearby dry streambed, Ncube arrived at his parents' kraal in the southern portion of the Marabetha district of Kezi, some 50 kilometres from the Botswanan border. Ncube entered the kraal and asked his father for food for himself and his friend. His father, however, locked him in a hut and left to report his presence at Kezi. In his father's absence, Ncube persuaded his niece to unlock the door and escaped, taking with him a pair of mustard-coloured trousers and a blue shirt which he donned over a camouflage jacket. The reaction team followed his spoor to the streambed where Maposa had been waiting but could not find their line of flight thereafter. In response, JOC Granite moved to Kezi. During the morning of 17 April BSAP ground coverage elements operating in the area of Sidube ranch discovered two sets of tracks near the Shashe river on the Botswanan border. The spoor entered the dry river and proceeded upstream for approximately one mile, before turning into Botswana. On 20 April the South Africans intercepted a radio message that the Botswanan police had arrested John Mkwananzi on a road inside their border. Ncube and Maposa were known to have arrived in Francistown on or about 21 April. JOC Granite stood down. Of the original group of seven, two were arrested in Rhodesia and four succeeded in escaping into Botswana. One other was believed to be in Rhodesia but his fate was unknown.

POSTSCRIPT

The failure of their five-year campaign led to feuding among the ZAPU leaders and deep discontent among the young rank and file in the Zambian camps. It would foment and produce the loss of personnel to ZANU and later the mutiny of 11 March 1971 and the abduction of Chikerema's rival, Jason Moyo, and George Silundika, a prominent ZAPU leader and 19 others.

Unlike ZANU, ZAPU did not mount another attempt to subvert an area for five years. They also forewent the Frelimo offer to facilitate ZAPU's penetration of northeastern Rhodesia. Instead this opportunity was inherited by ZANU who began to send in small, probing groups. ZAPU mounted no more than hit-and-run attacks in the Zambezi valley using landmines but only from August 1972, when they grievously injured Maurice Ellement, a visitor to Mana Pools. The next mine killed Sergeant Jeffrey Hill of 6RR in the Chete national park on 28 October 1972.

ZANU also planted landmines. On 27 April 1971 a Support Group 1RLI truck detonated one in the dry riverbed at Mukumbura on the northeastern border when returning from a visit to the Portuguese post. Corporal Trevor Wentzel, Lance-Corporal Len Moorcroft and Trooper G.D. Meyer were killed and Sergeant Chris Gough and troopers Charles Hallows and Mike Wigg were injured. This prompted the Rhodesian security forces to take the long anticipated threat to the northeast more seriously and to again send tracker teams and others into Mozambique to assist the Portuguese in attempting to halt the southward march of Frelimo.

The Rhodesian forces, despite the presence of the SAP and despite the total success of most of the recent operations, remained troubled about how to meet the threat with the troops available to them. As the number of insurgents grew, Rhodesia could never again react to each incident with overwhelming strength. Instead of platoons supporting trackers, at best there might be two four-man sticks. The lack of manpower made it easy for insurgents to slip through the porous northeastern border in particular and disappear to live

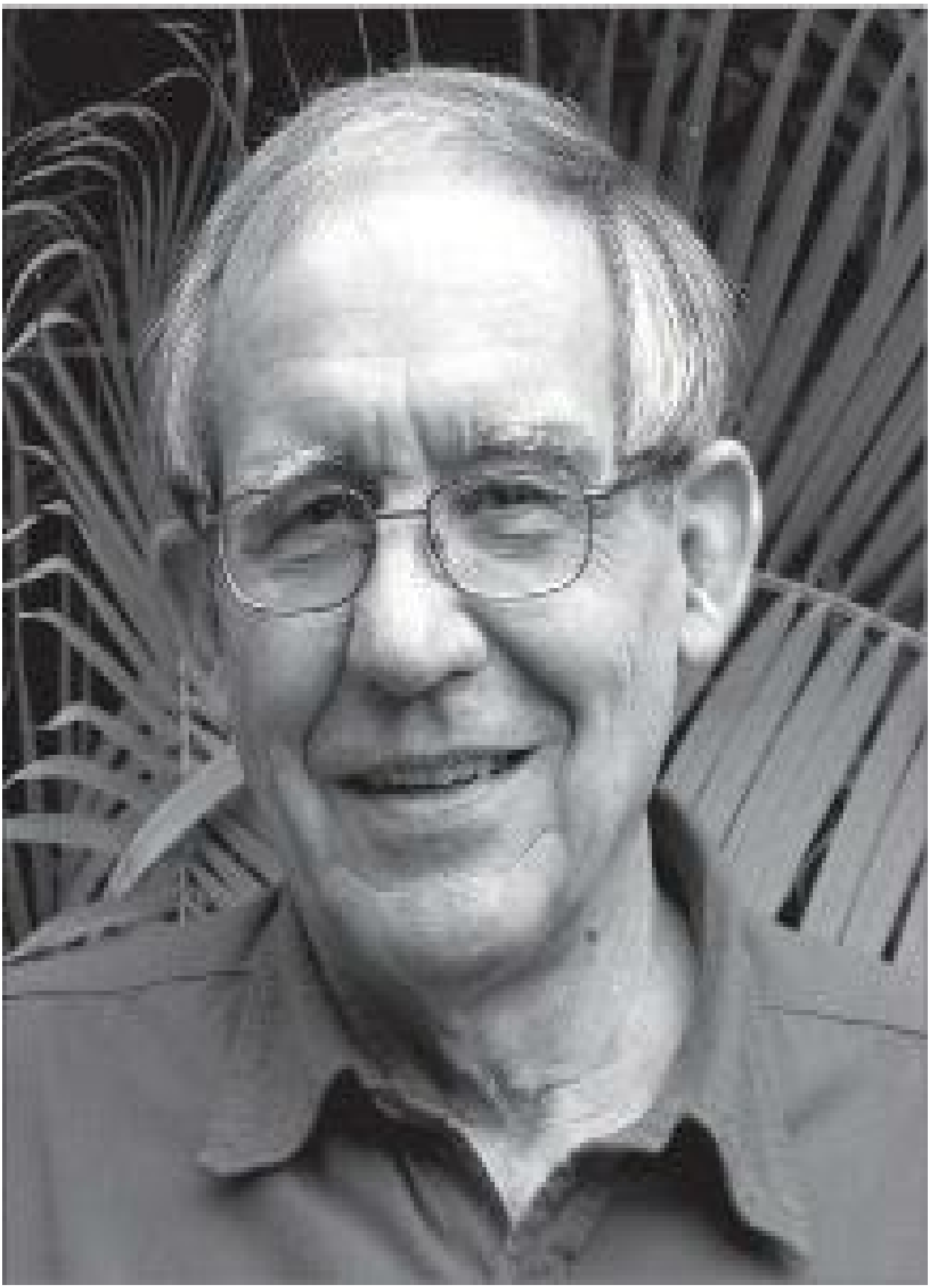
among and subvert the rural African populations. The use of brutality was not new because from the outset the African nationalists had built their power base with the petrol bomb.

Their subversion cost the Rhodesian security forces the key to their earlier successes. No longer did the local African dare or wish to report the whereabouts of the insurgents. The brutality of the punishment meted out to any betrayer and his family ensured silence. Suddenly, from 1972 onward, the hunt for the insurgents became that more difficult.

The loss of the Portuguese after their coup in Lisbon in 1974 opened the entire eastern border to incursions, forcing the Rhodesians further on the defensive. They would attempt to meet the challenge by maximizing the use of manpower and resources, but that is a subject for further study.

To the men of E Company 8RR, wherever they may be

This first complete narrative of the early operations in the Rhodesian Bush War is based on research which I have published in my A Matter of Weeks, Rather than Months (Trafford, 2008) and on hitherto unpublished material in the Rhodesian Army Association collection, currently housed in the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum. As always, I stand in debt to Carole, my beloved wife and proof-reader, who straightens out my text and deals with the errors of commission and omission, and has done so unstintingly for 43 years. I also owe much to the indomitable publishing duo of Chris and Kerrin Cocks.



Richard Wood BA (Hons) (Rhodes), PhD (Edinburgh), FRHistS was born in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). He was educated at St George's College in Salisbury (Harare), Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa, and Edinburgh University, Scotland. He was a Commonwealth scholar and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He was the Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Research Fellow at the University of Rhodesia and a Professor of History at the University of Durban-Westville. He has written three definitive publications on post-Second World War Rhodesian politics: The Welensky Papers, So Far and No Further! and A Matter of Weeks rather than Months. He is a renowned military historian, having served as a territorial soldier in the Rhodesia Regiment, and the Mapping & Research Unit of the Rhodesian Intelligence Corps. He is also author of The War Diaries of André Dennison (1989), Counter-Strike from the Sky: The Rhodesian All-Arms Fireforce in the War in the Bush, 1974–1980 (2009) and Operation Dingo: Rhodesian Raid on Chimoio and Tembué, 1977 (2011). He lives in Durban, South Africa with his wife Carole.

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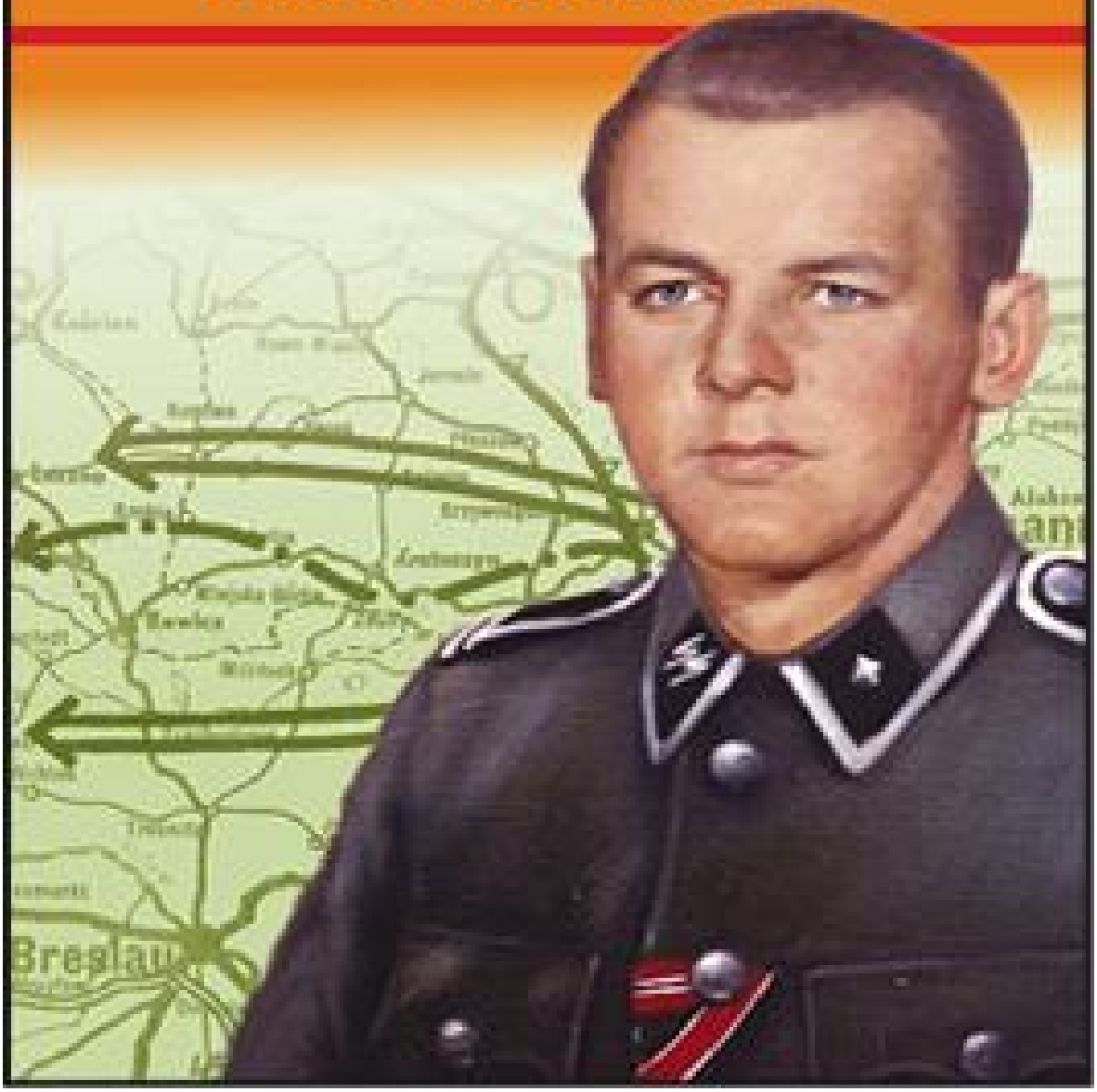

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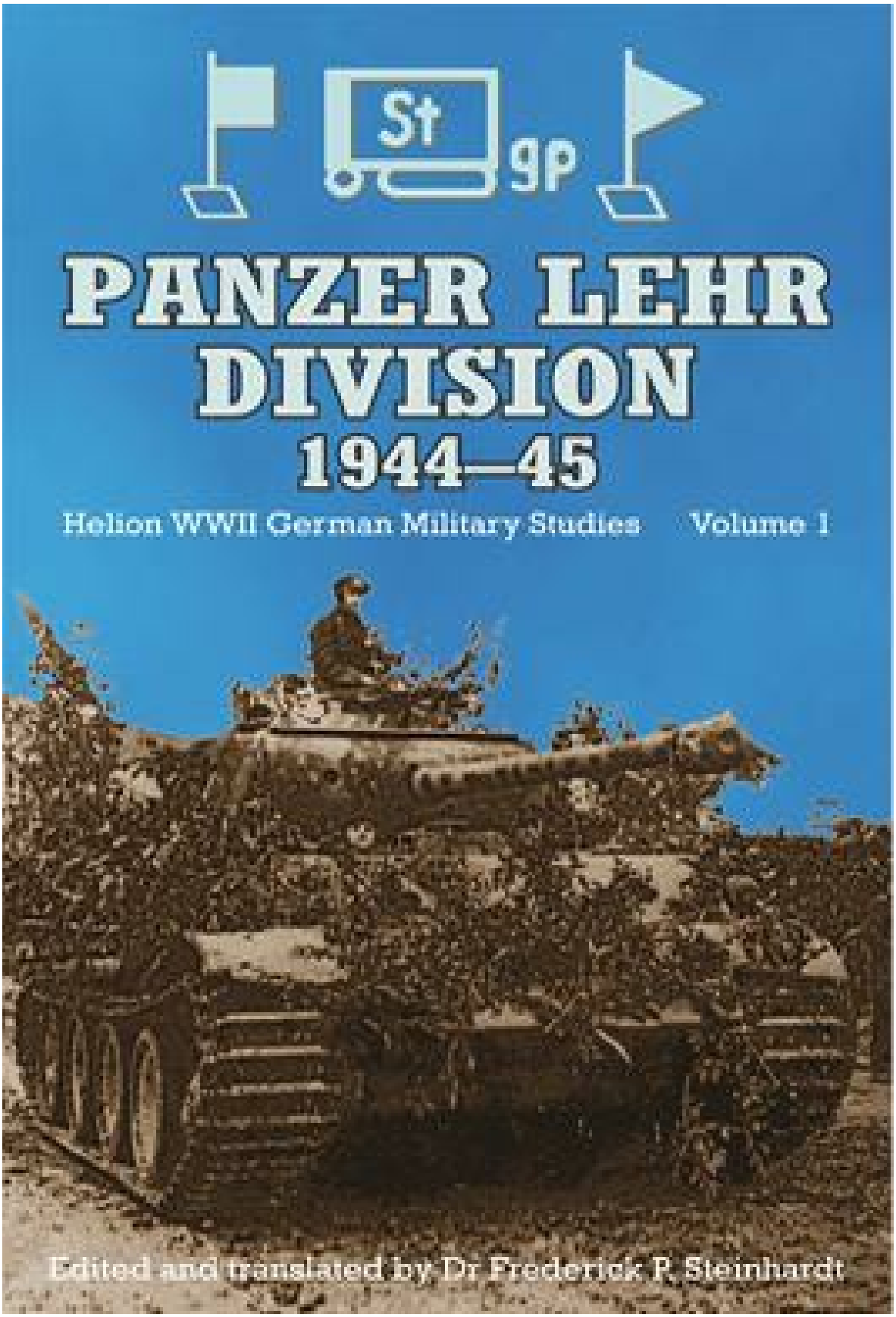
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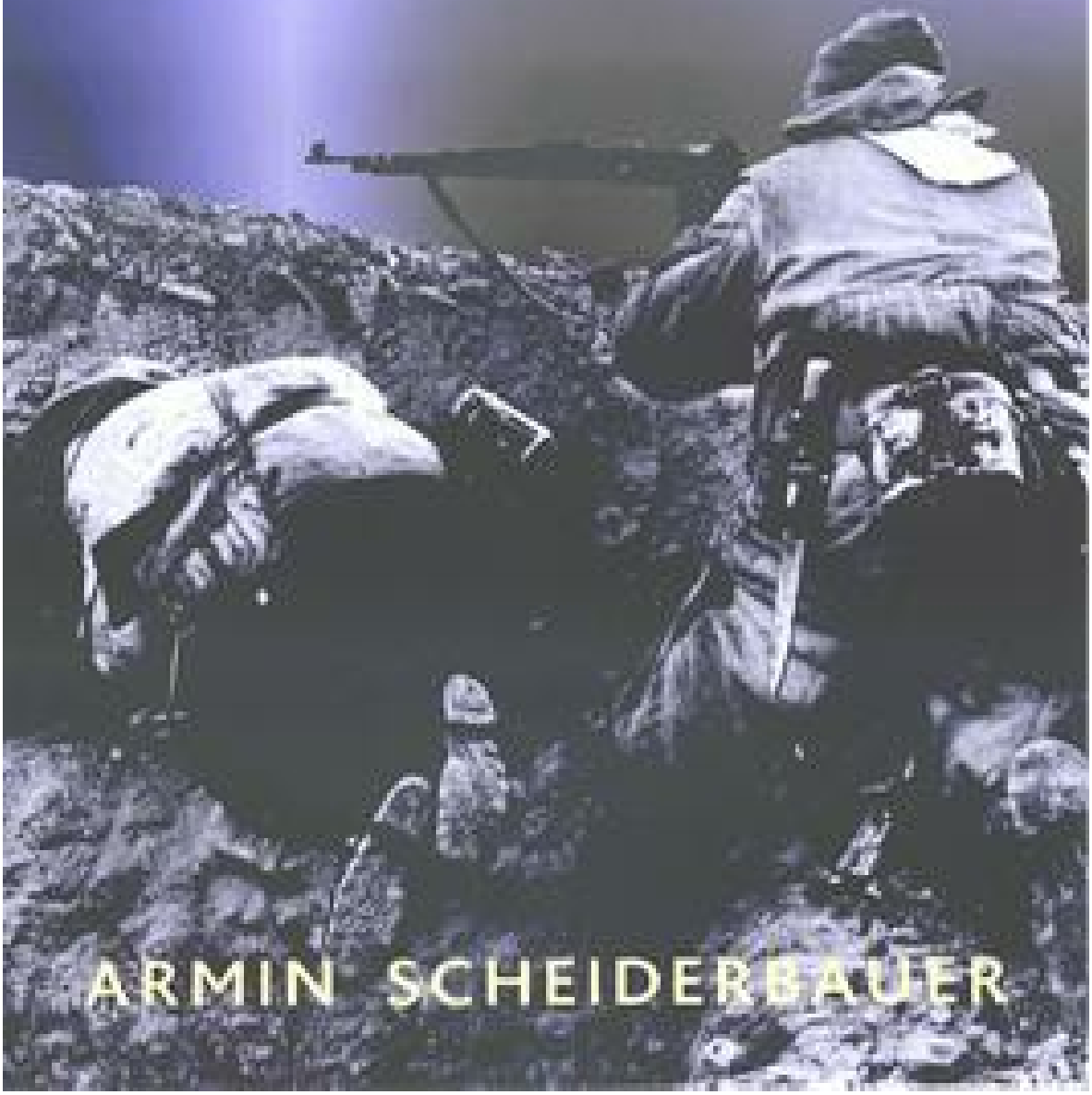

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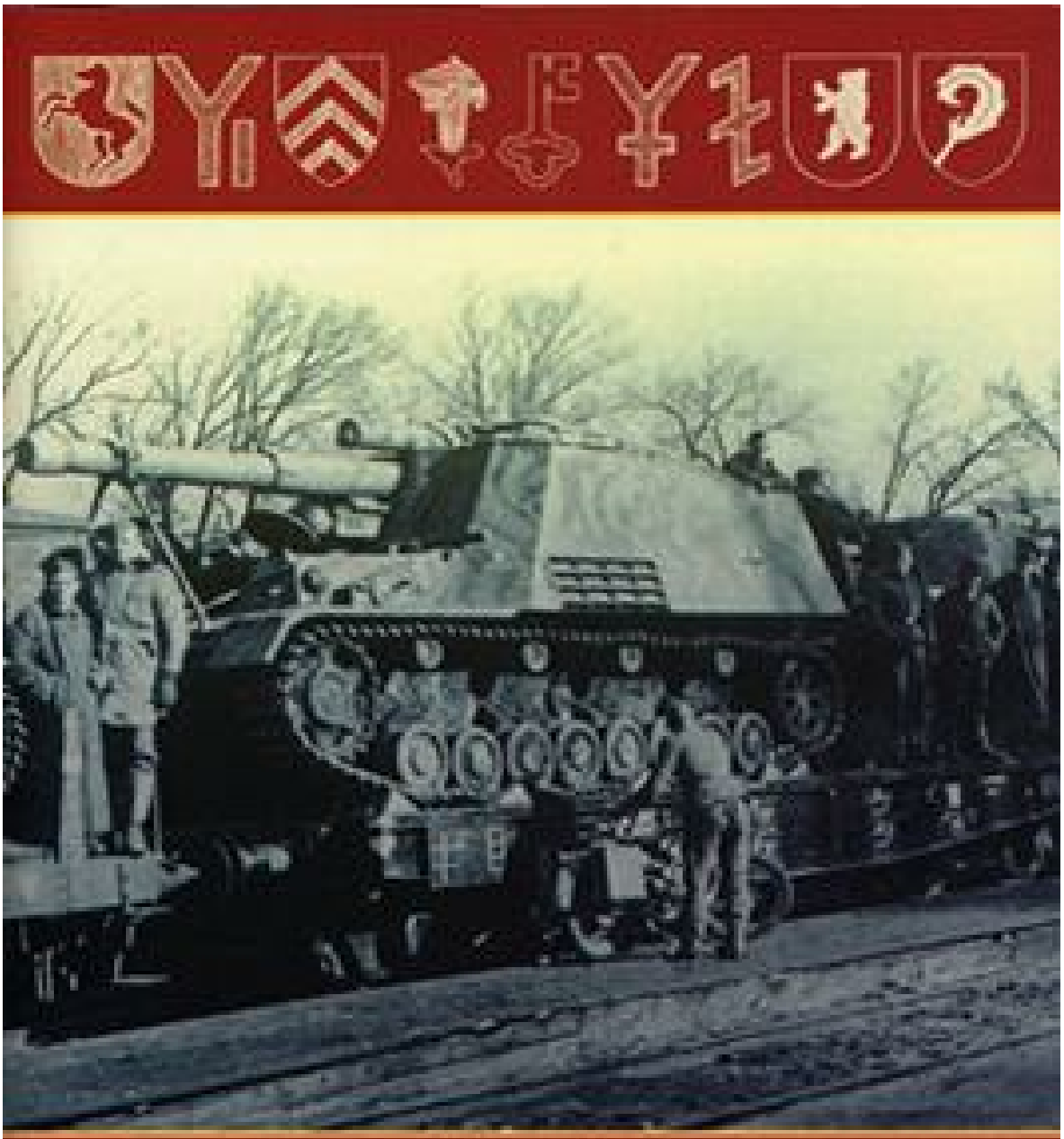

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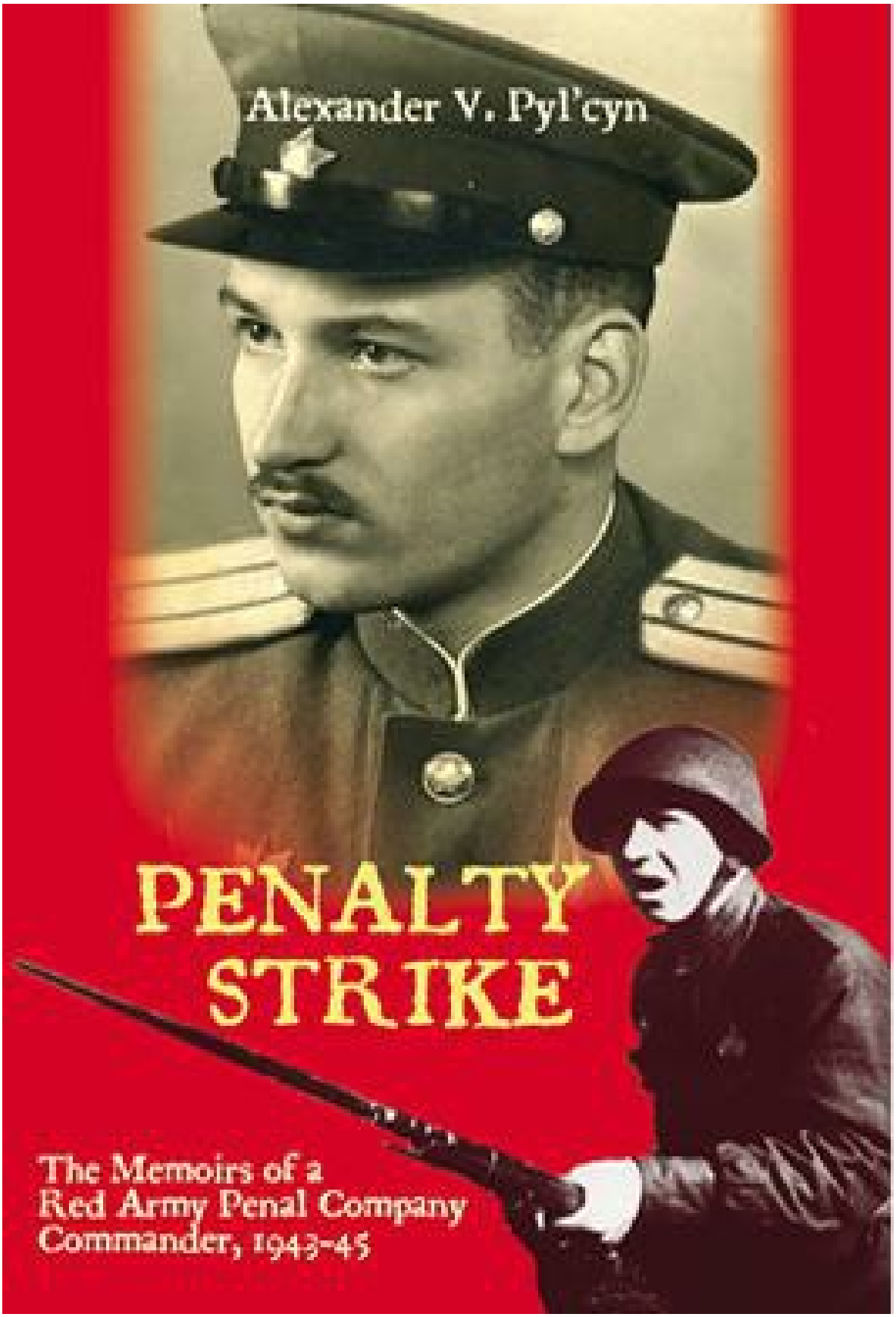
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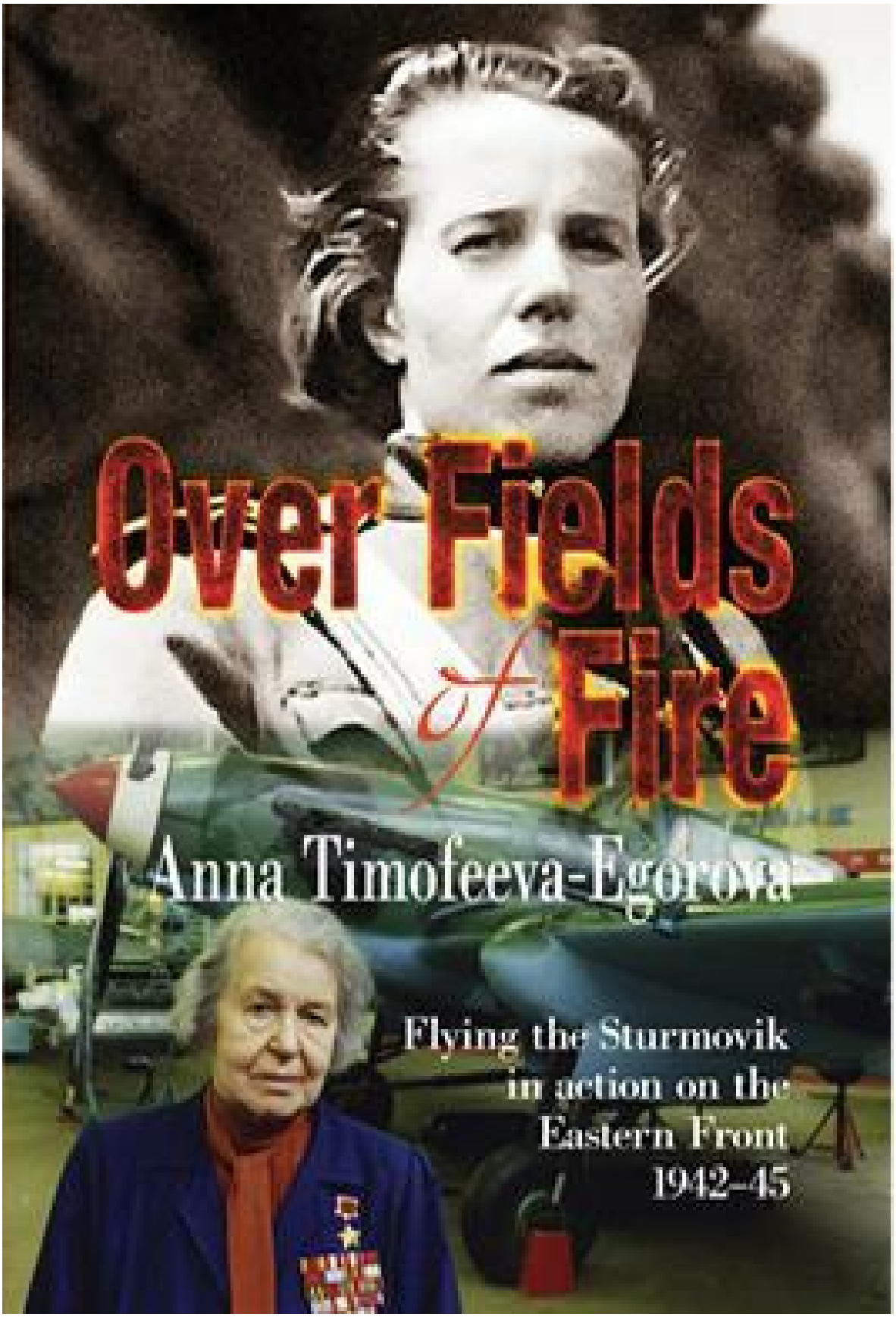
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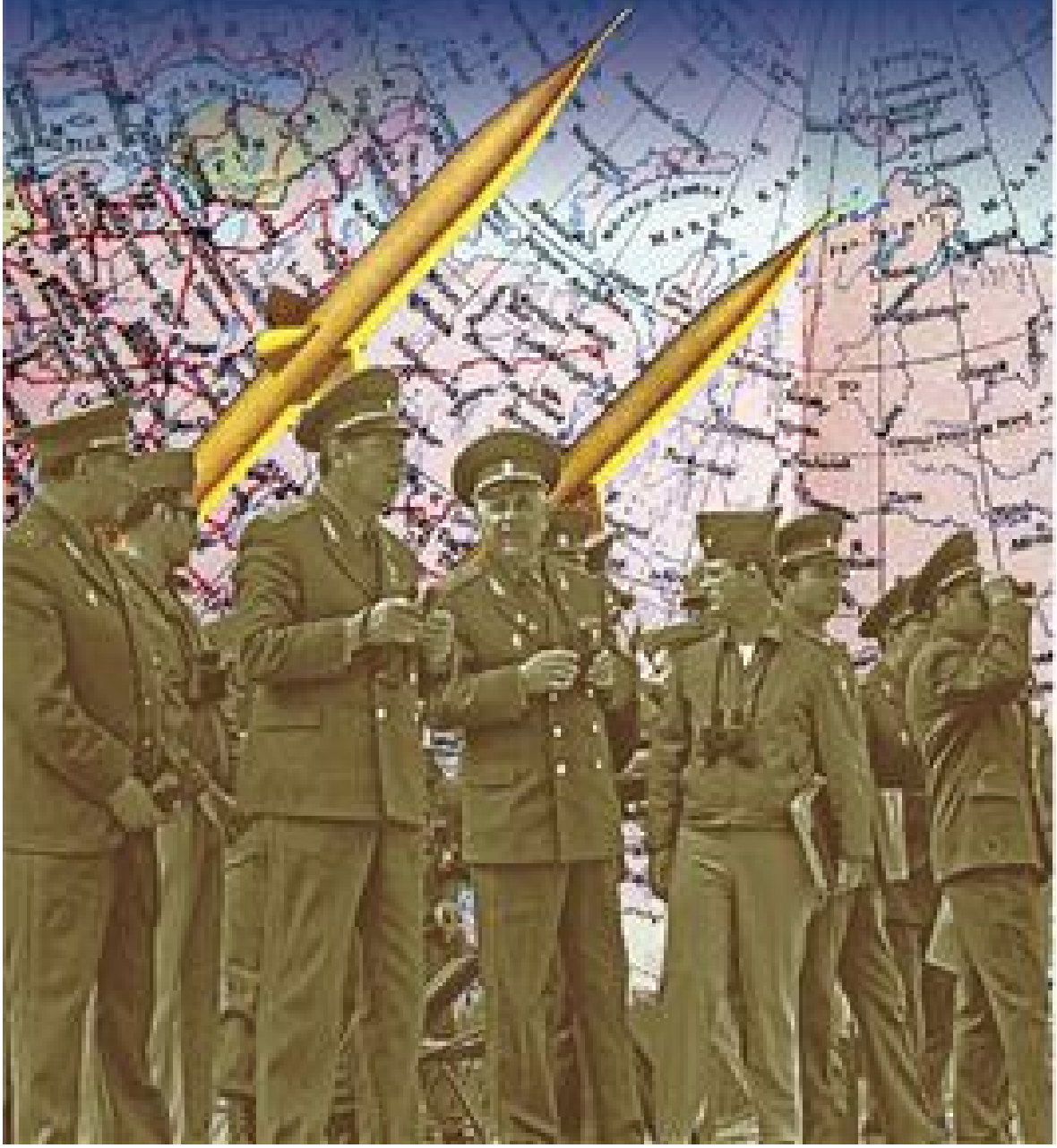

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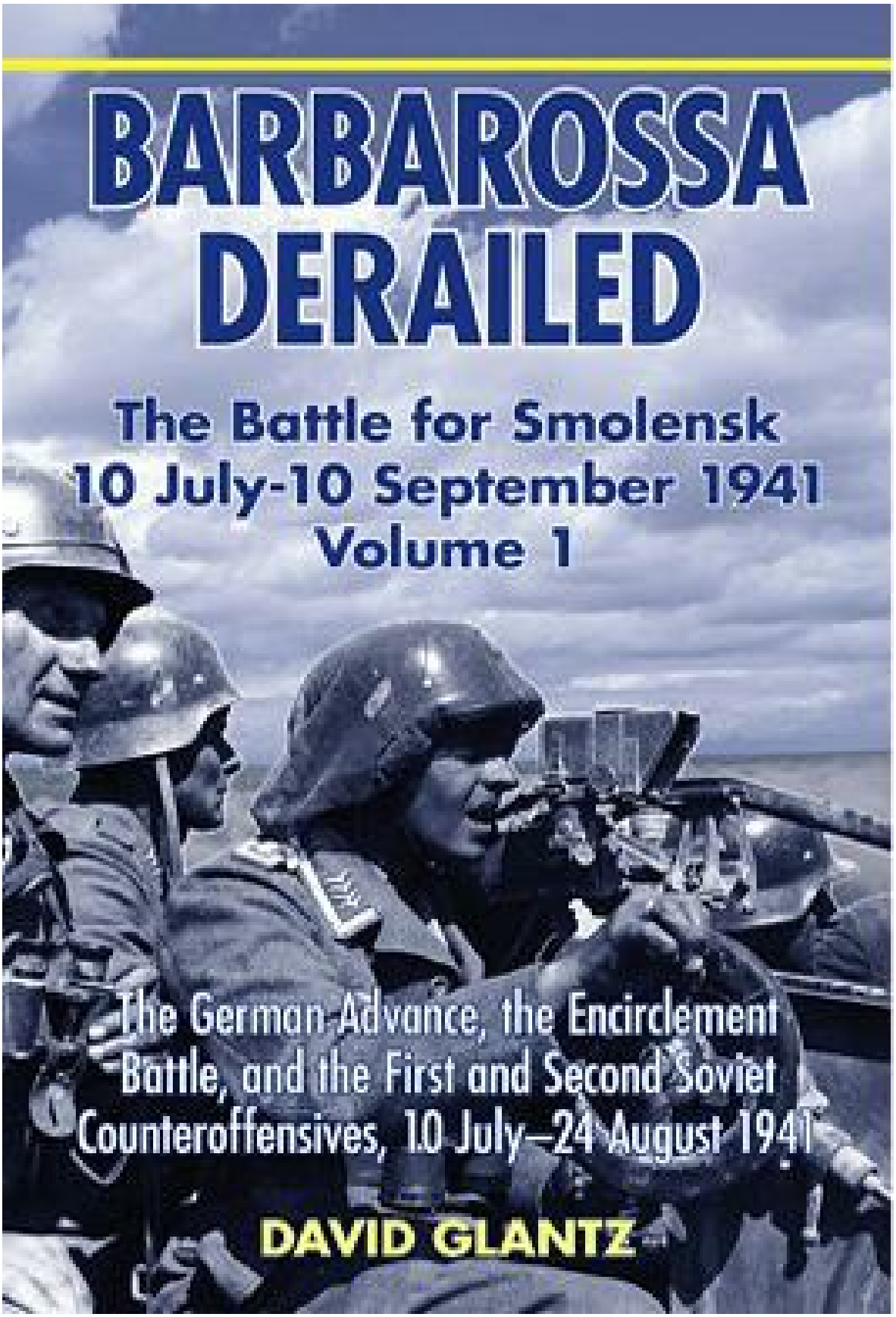
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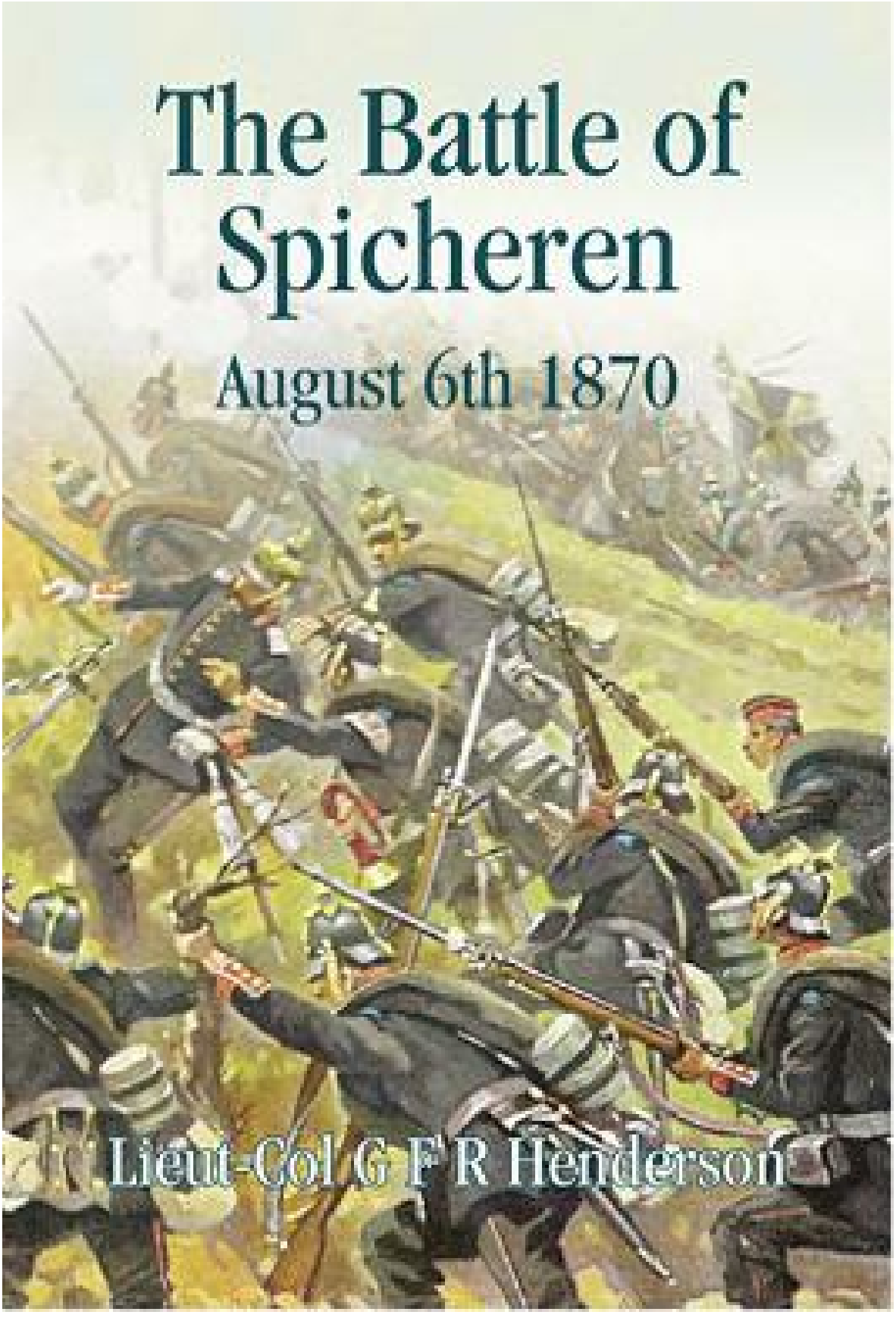

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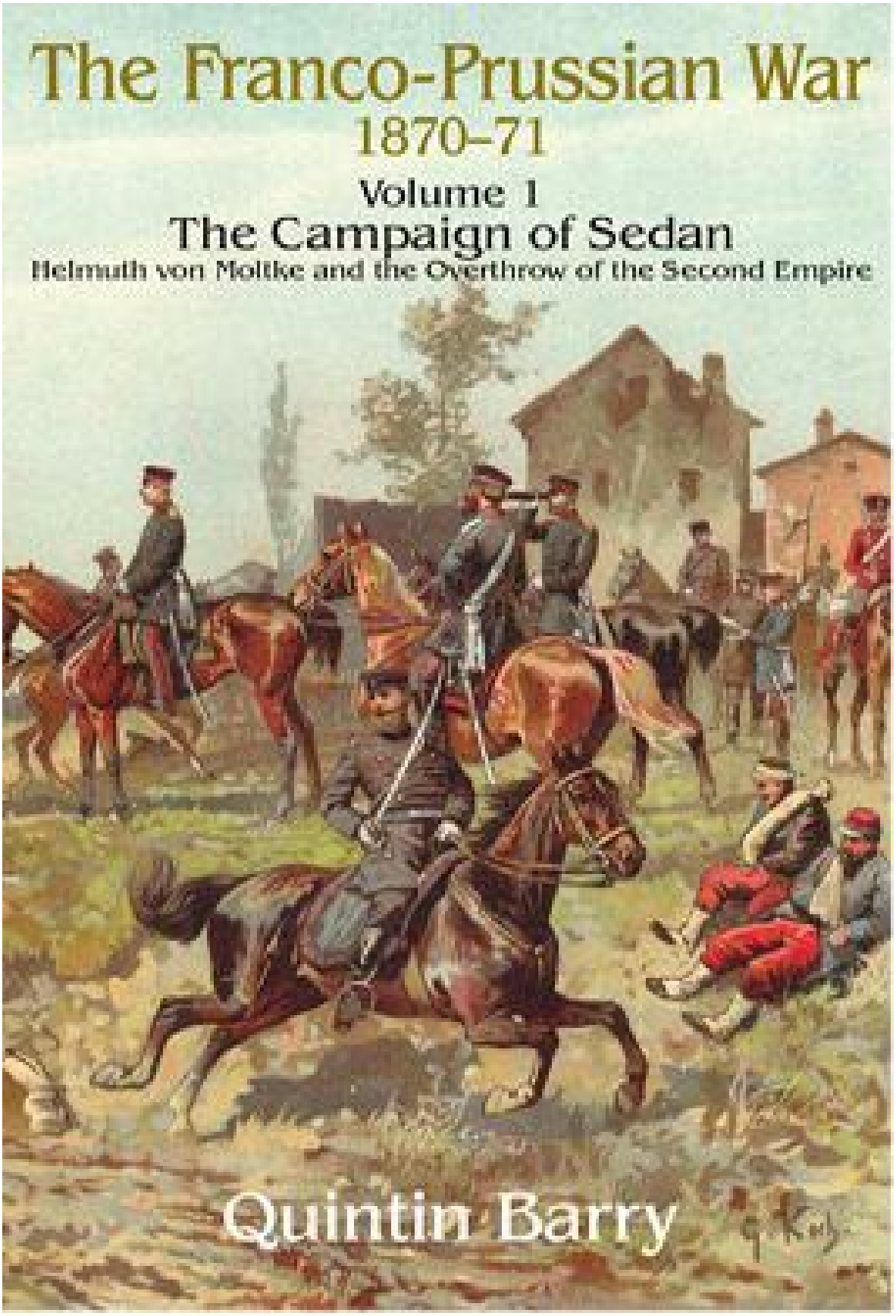

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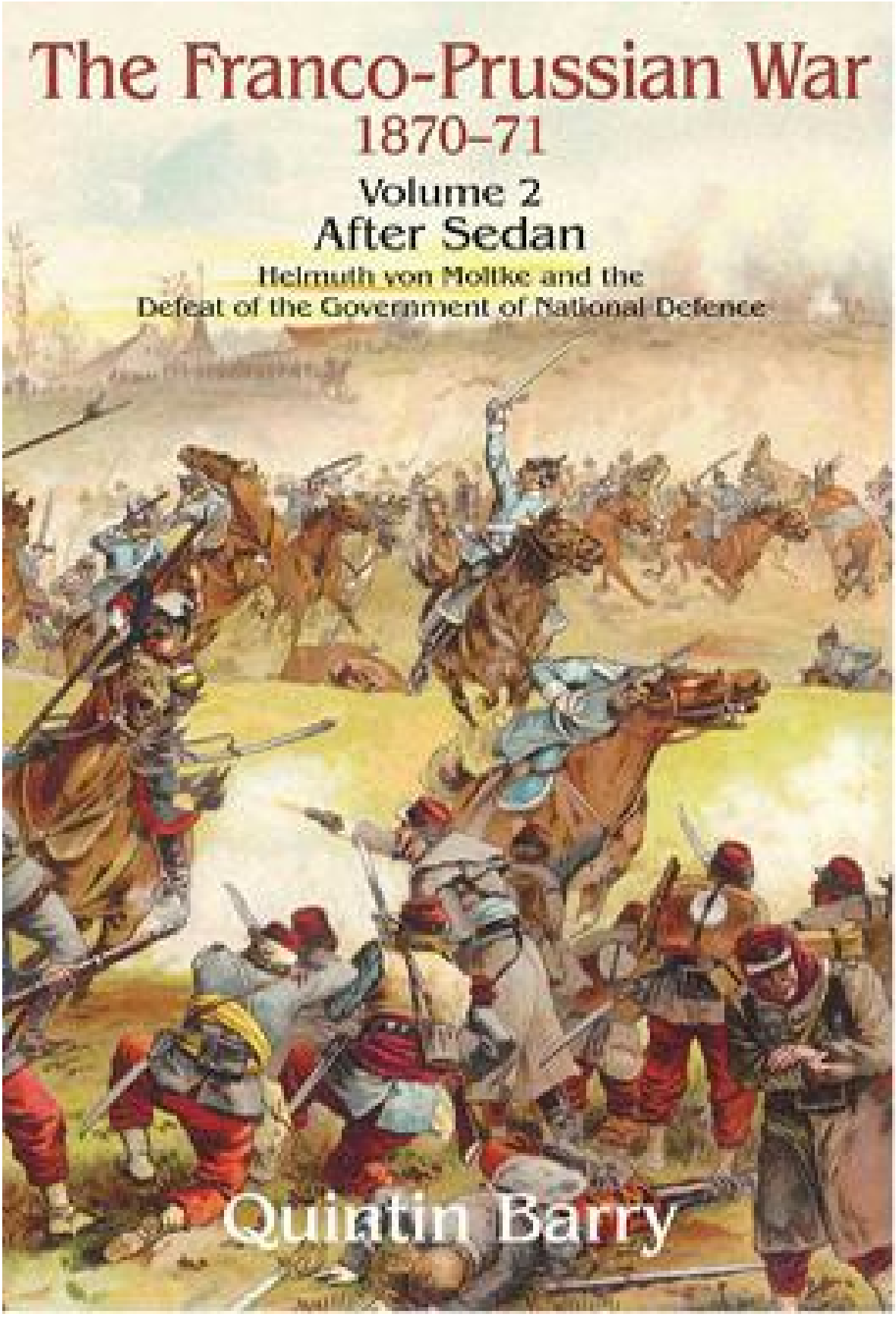

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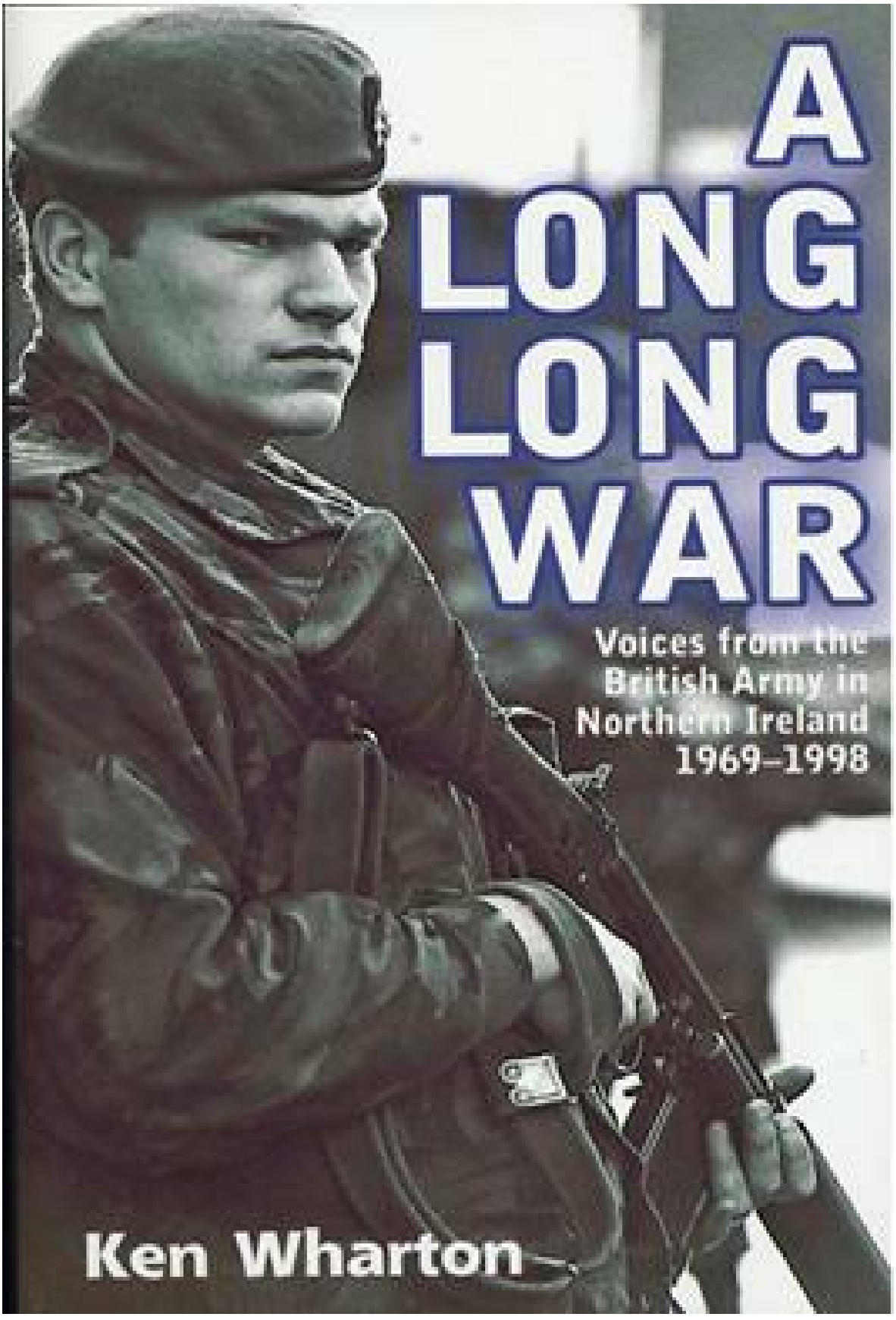
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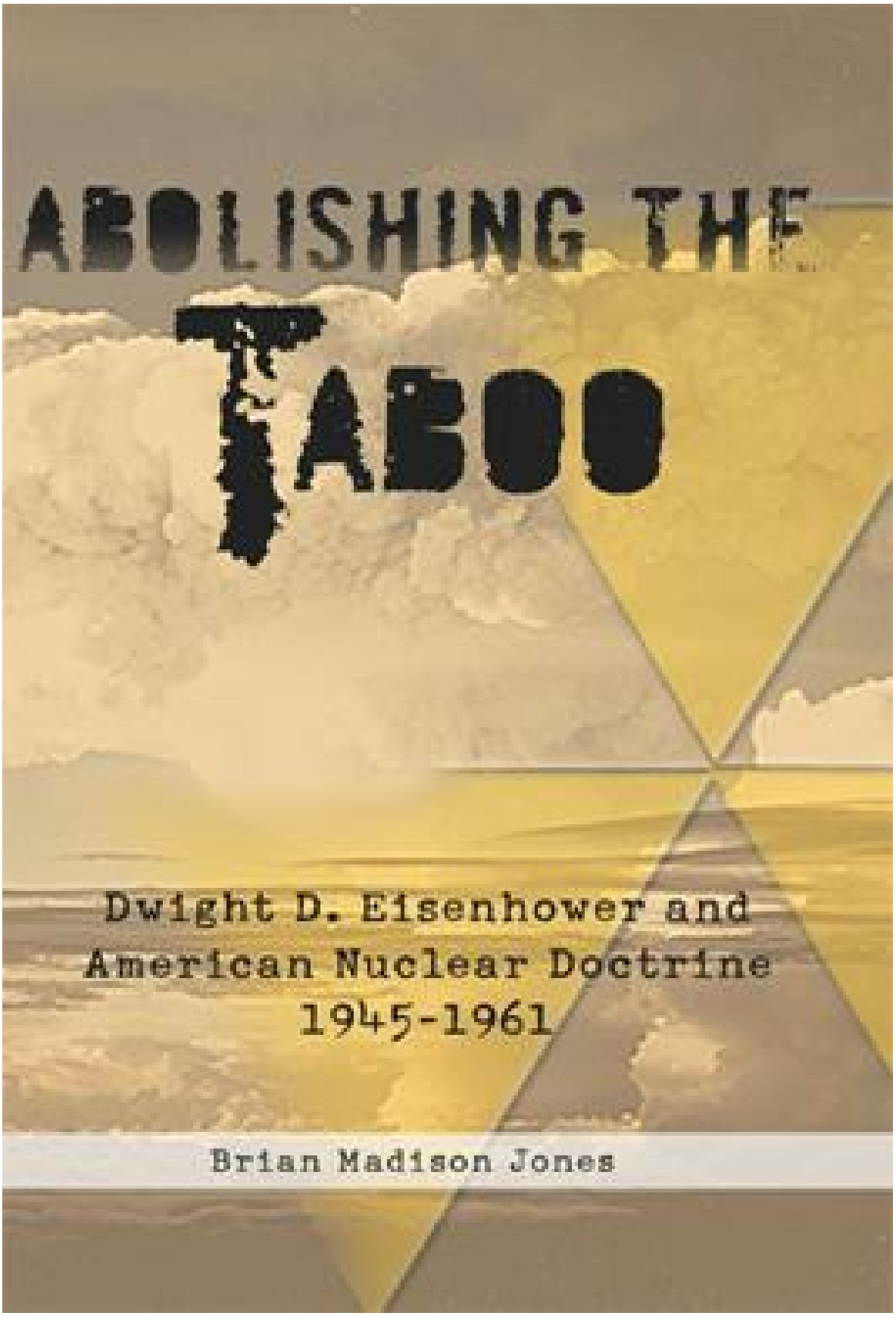
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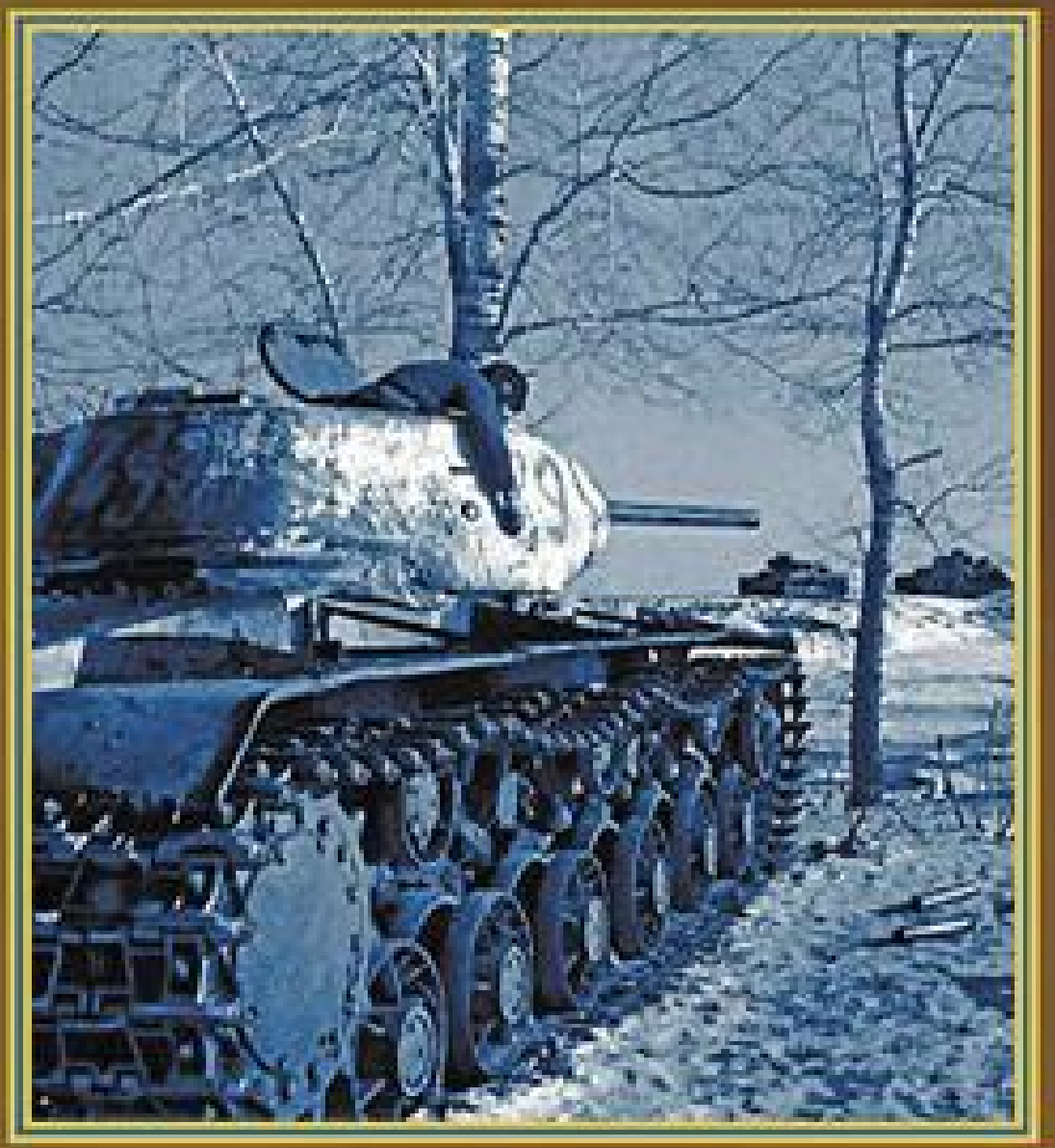

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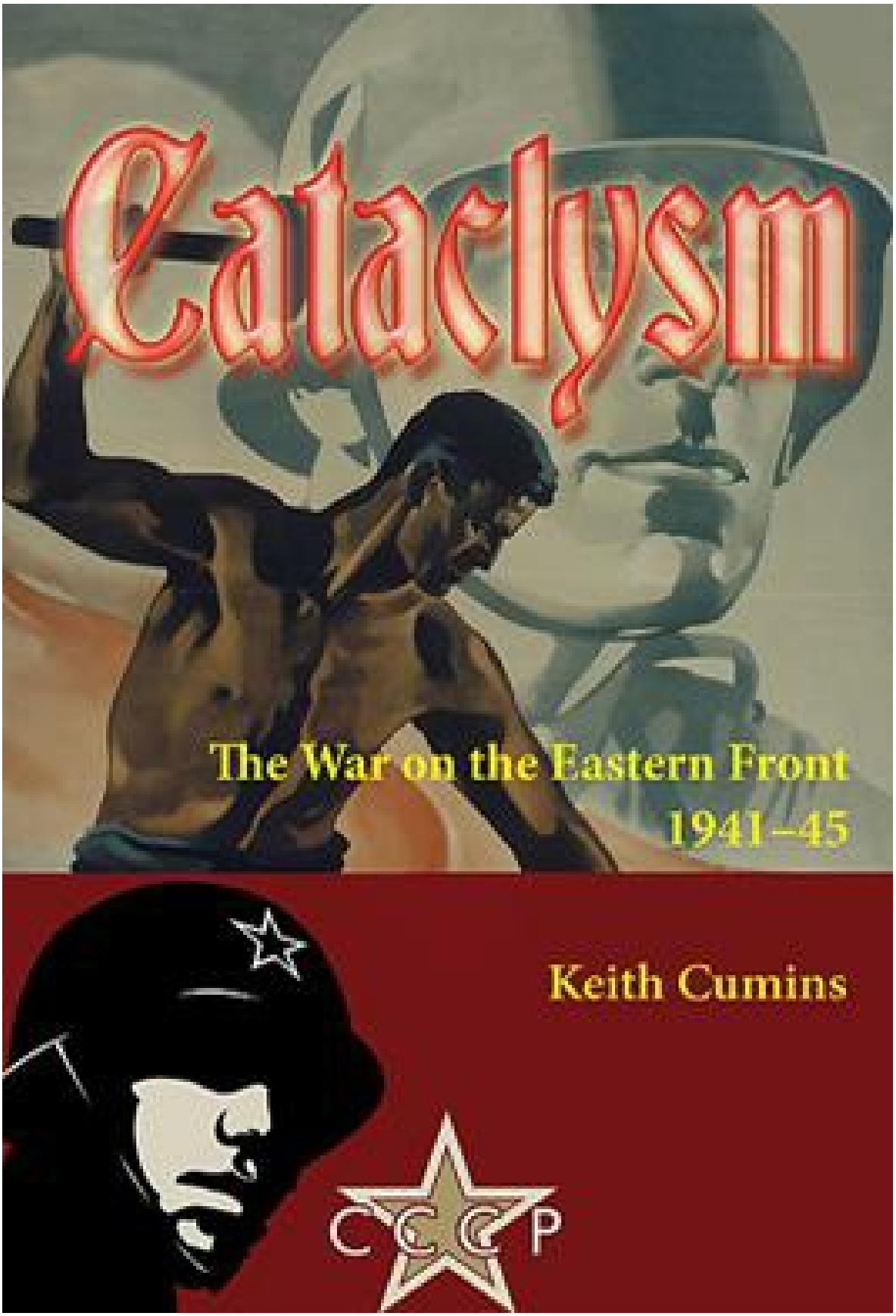
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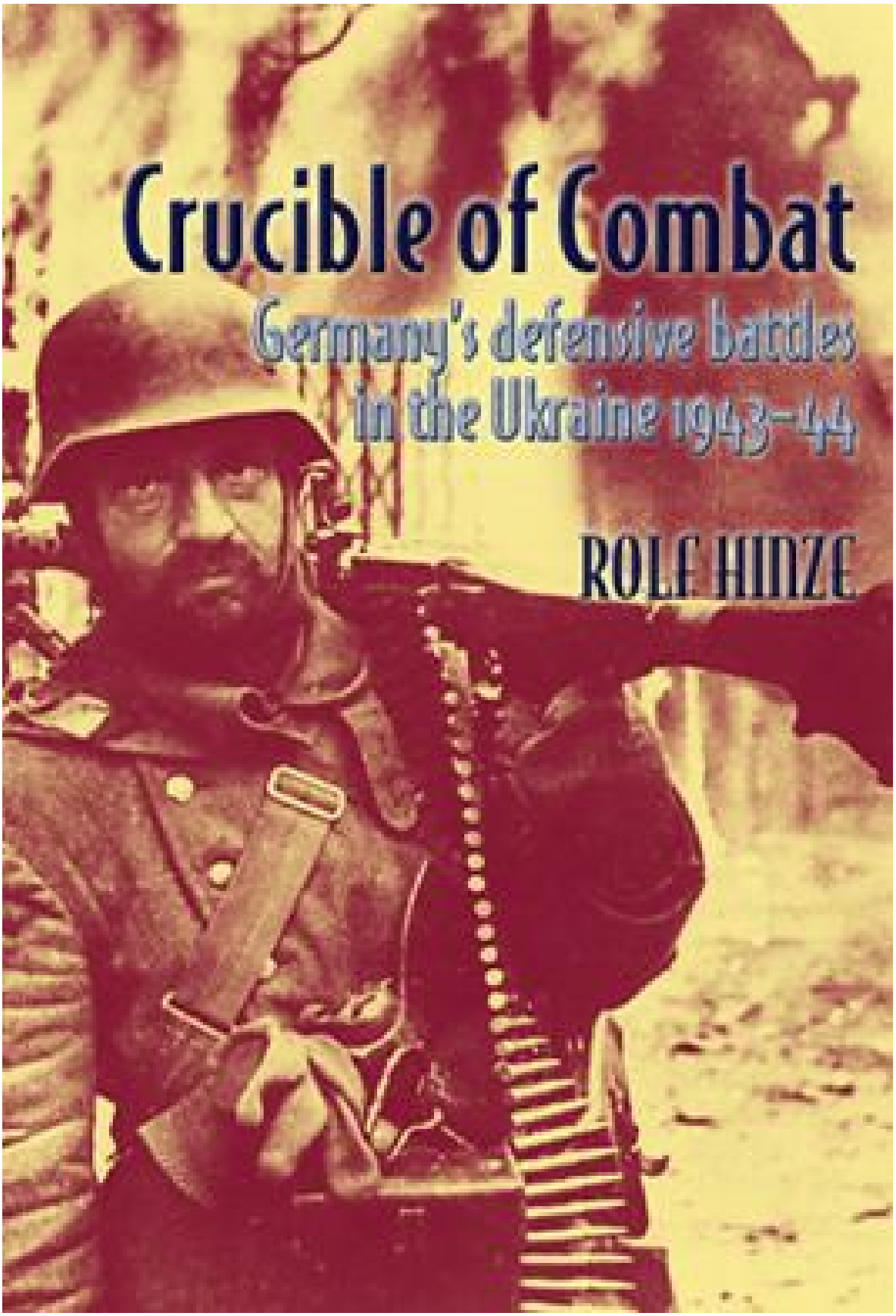
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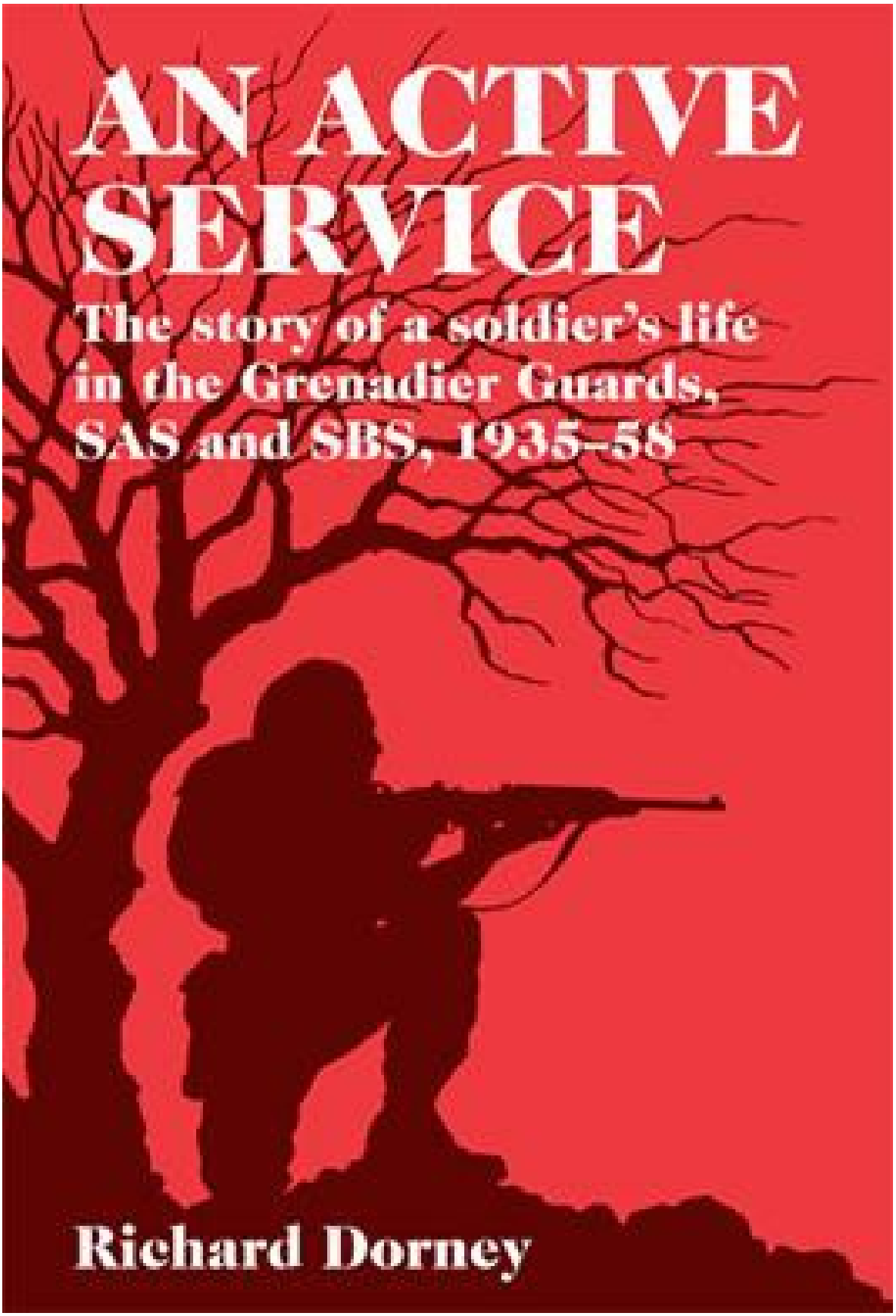
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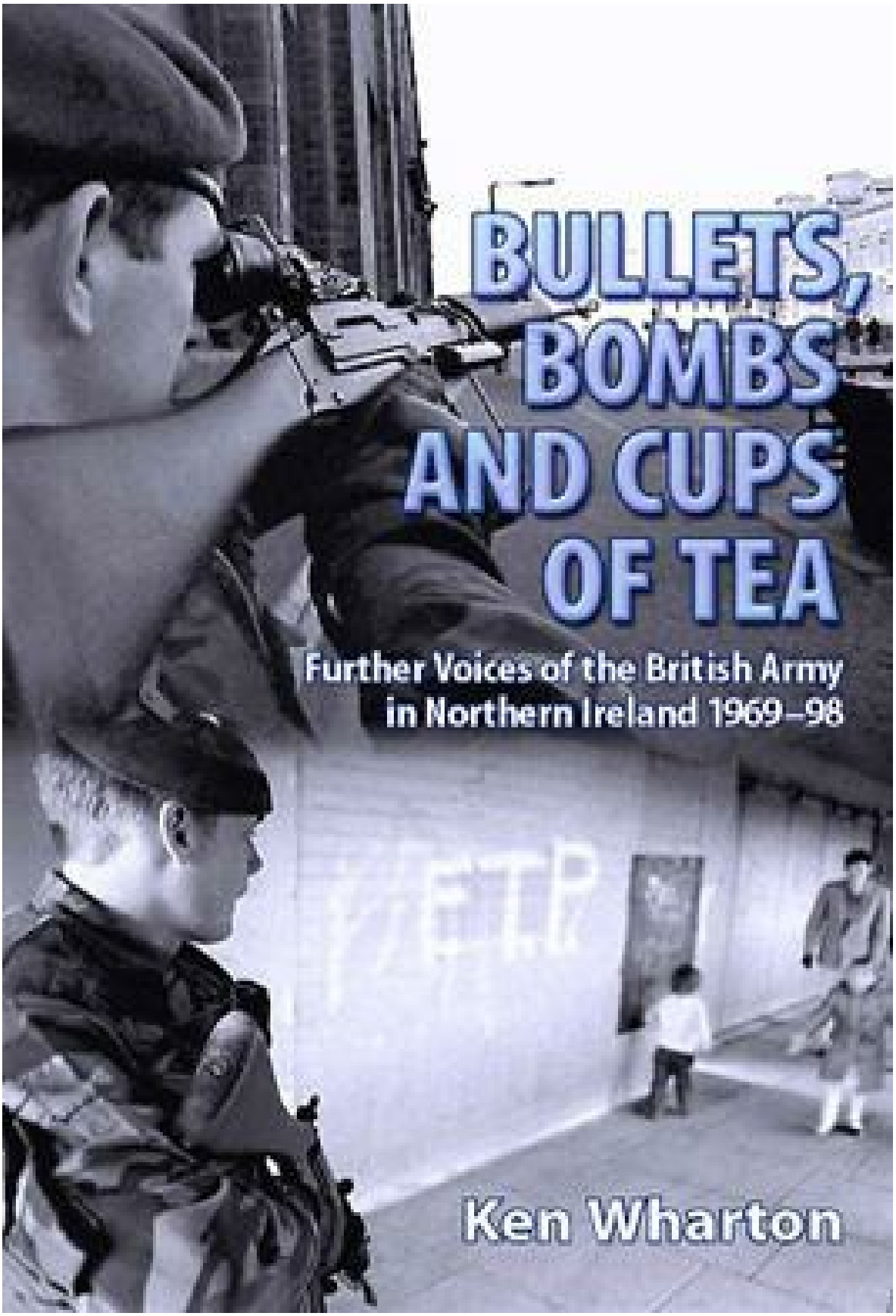
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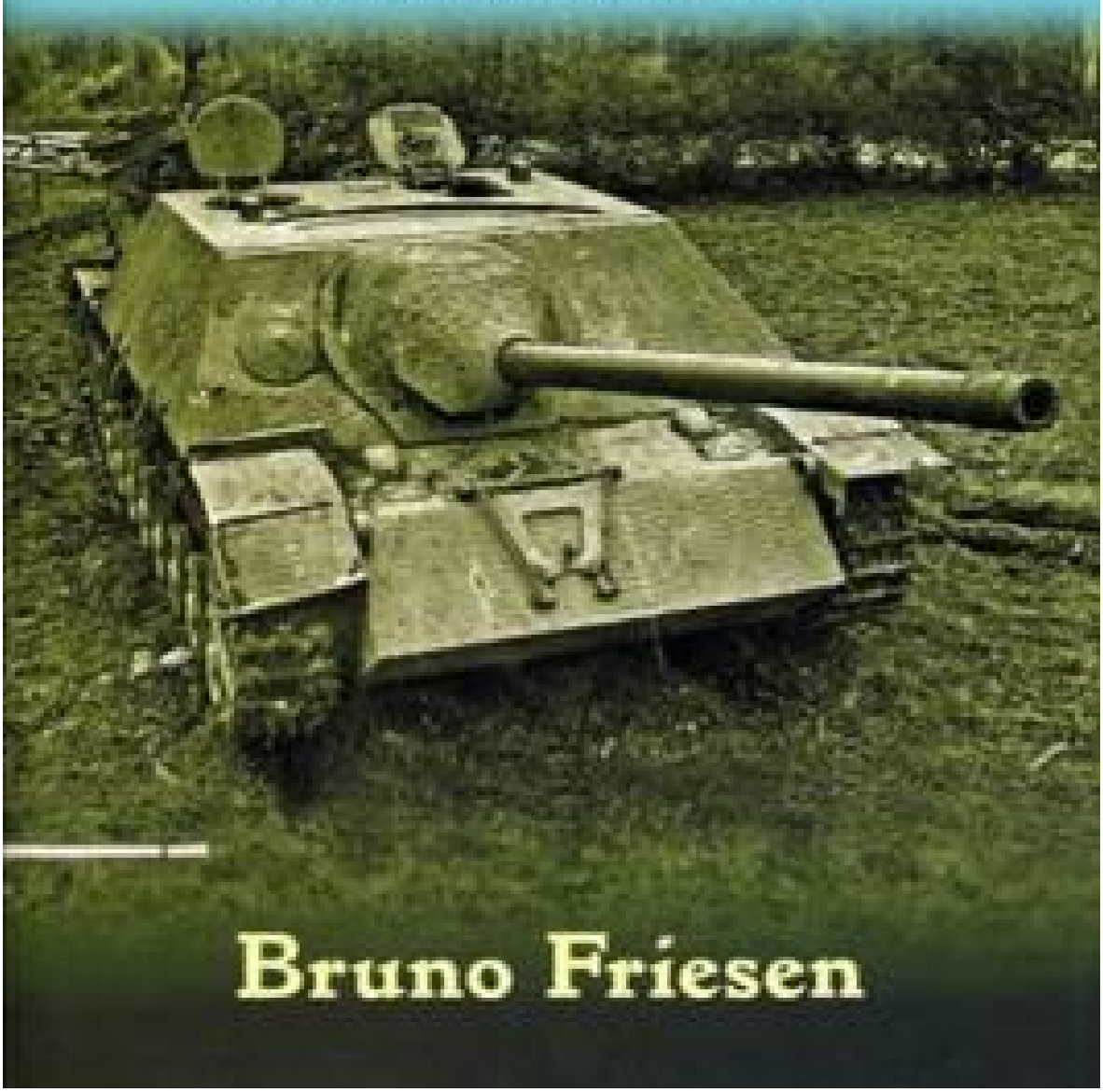

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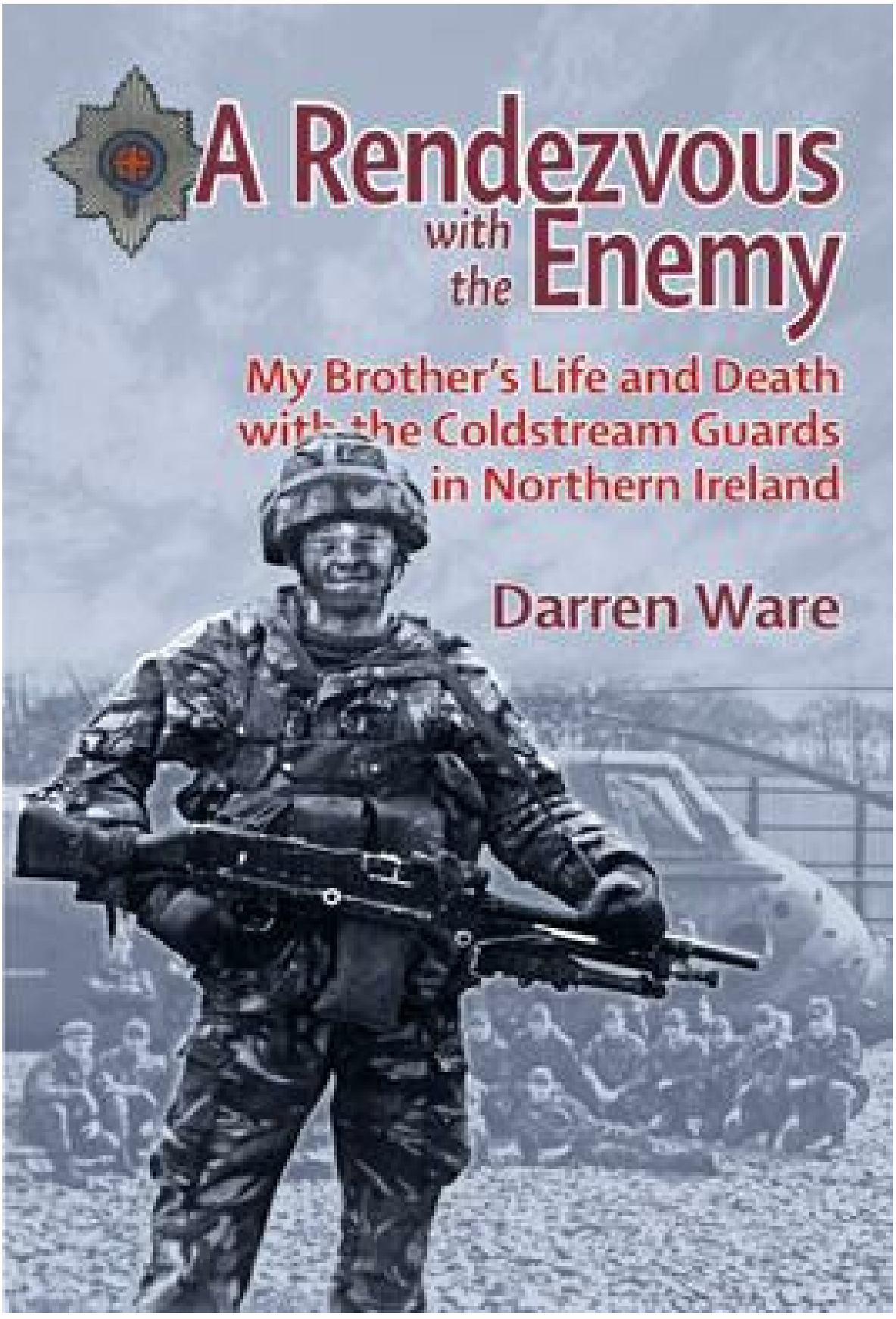
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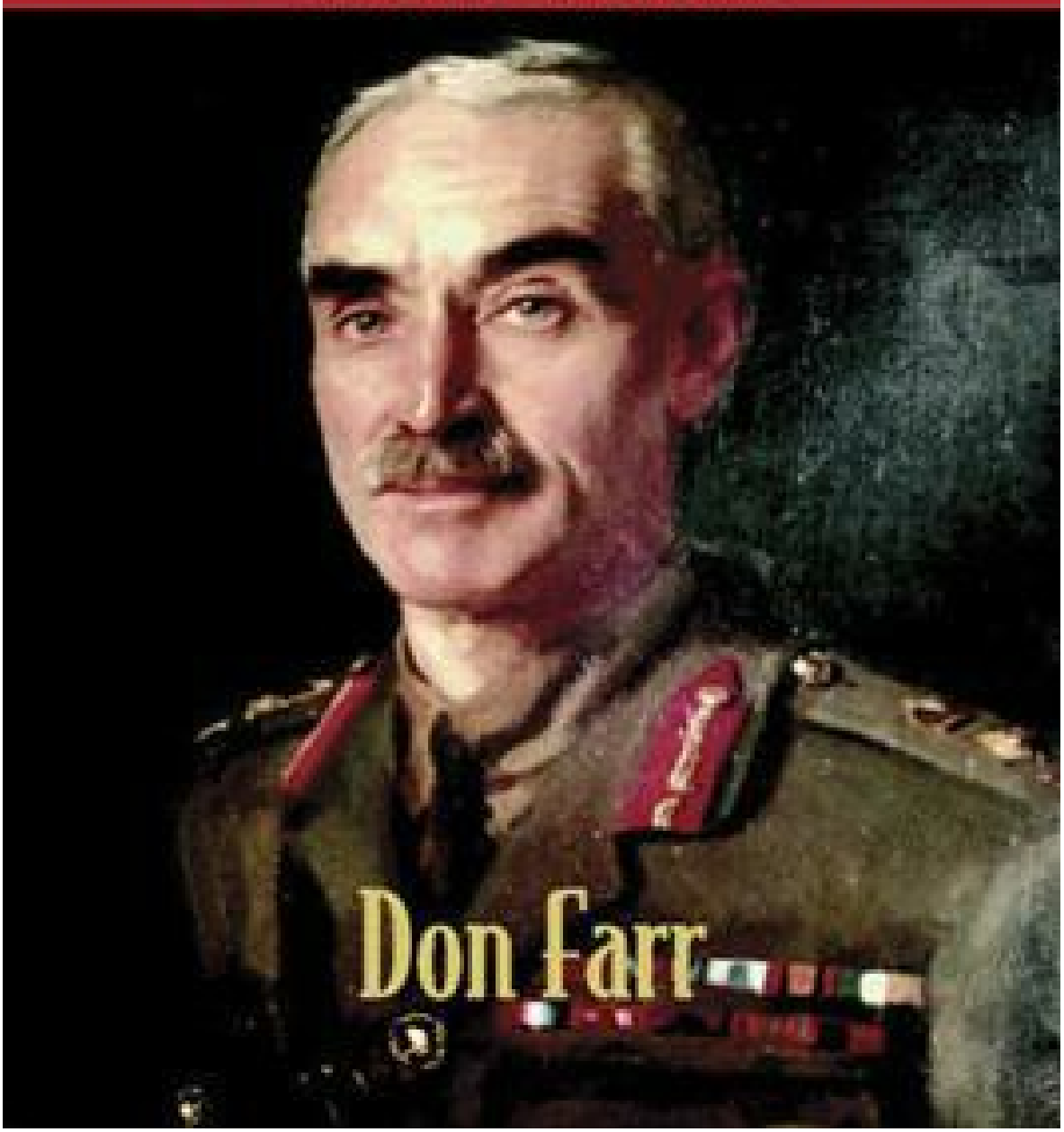

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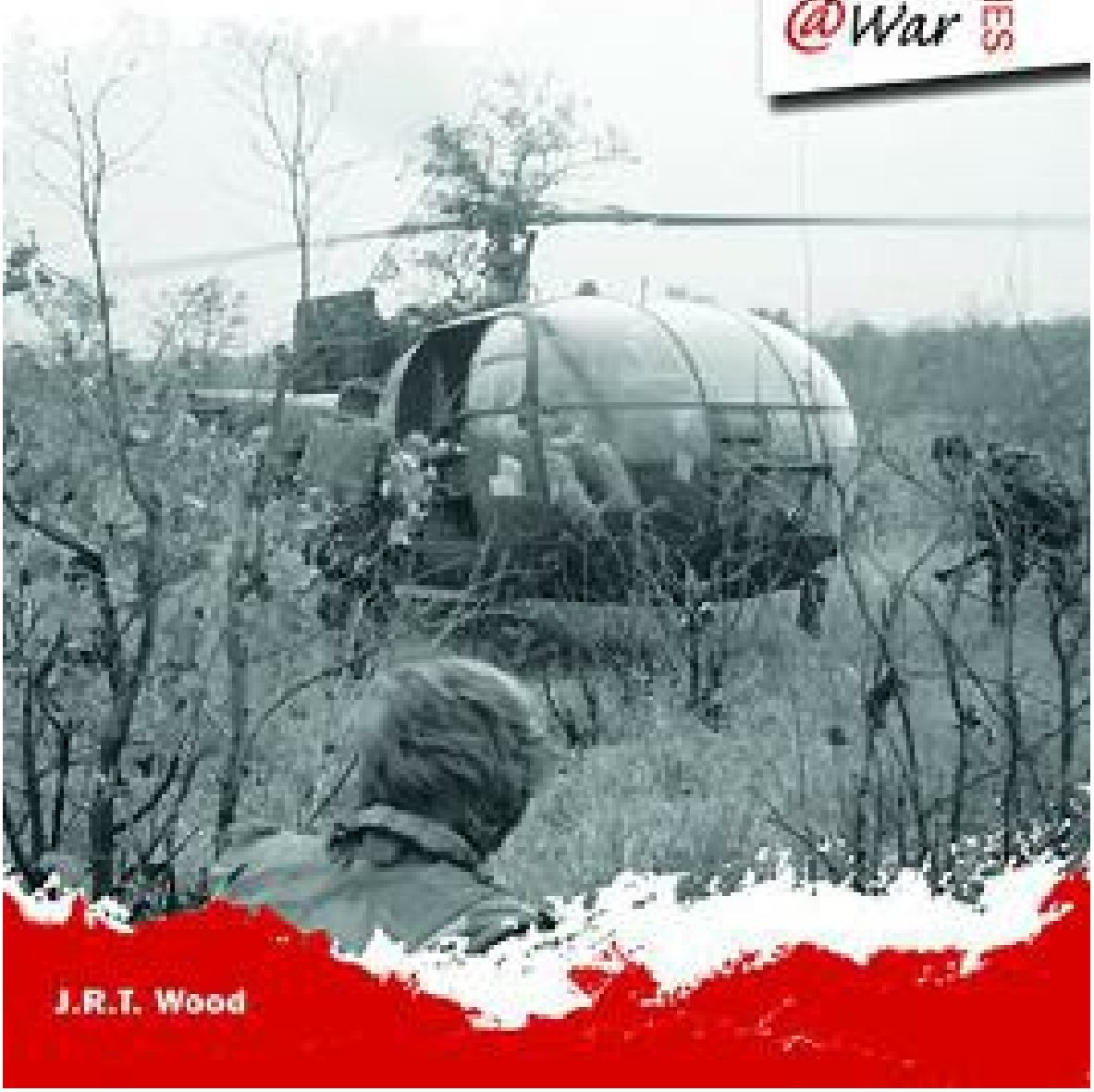

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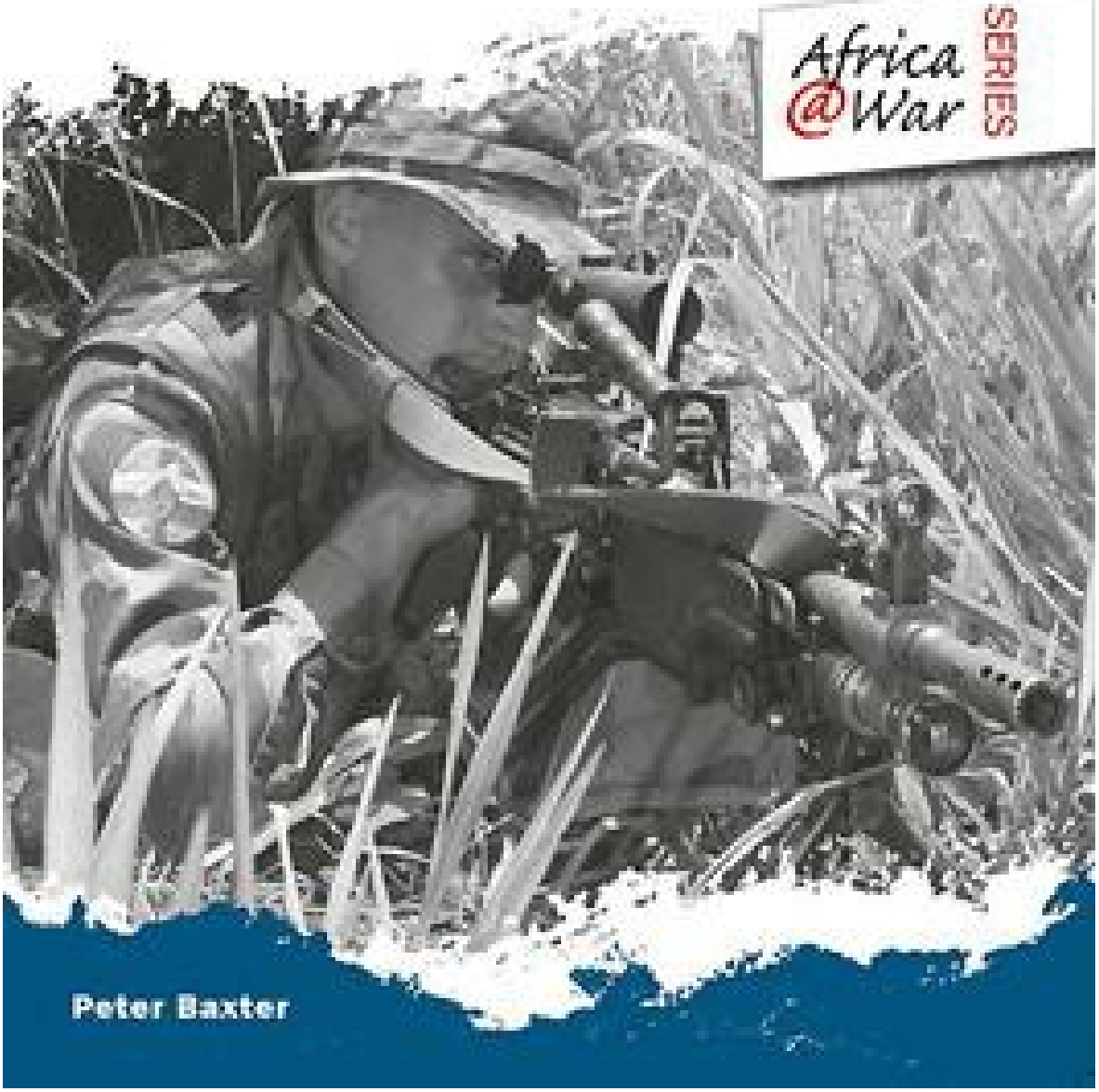

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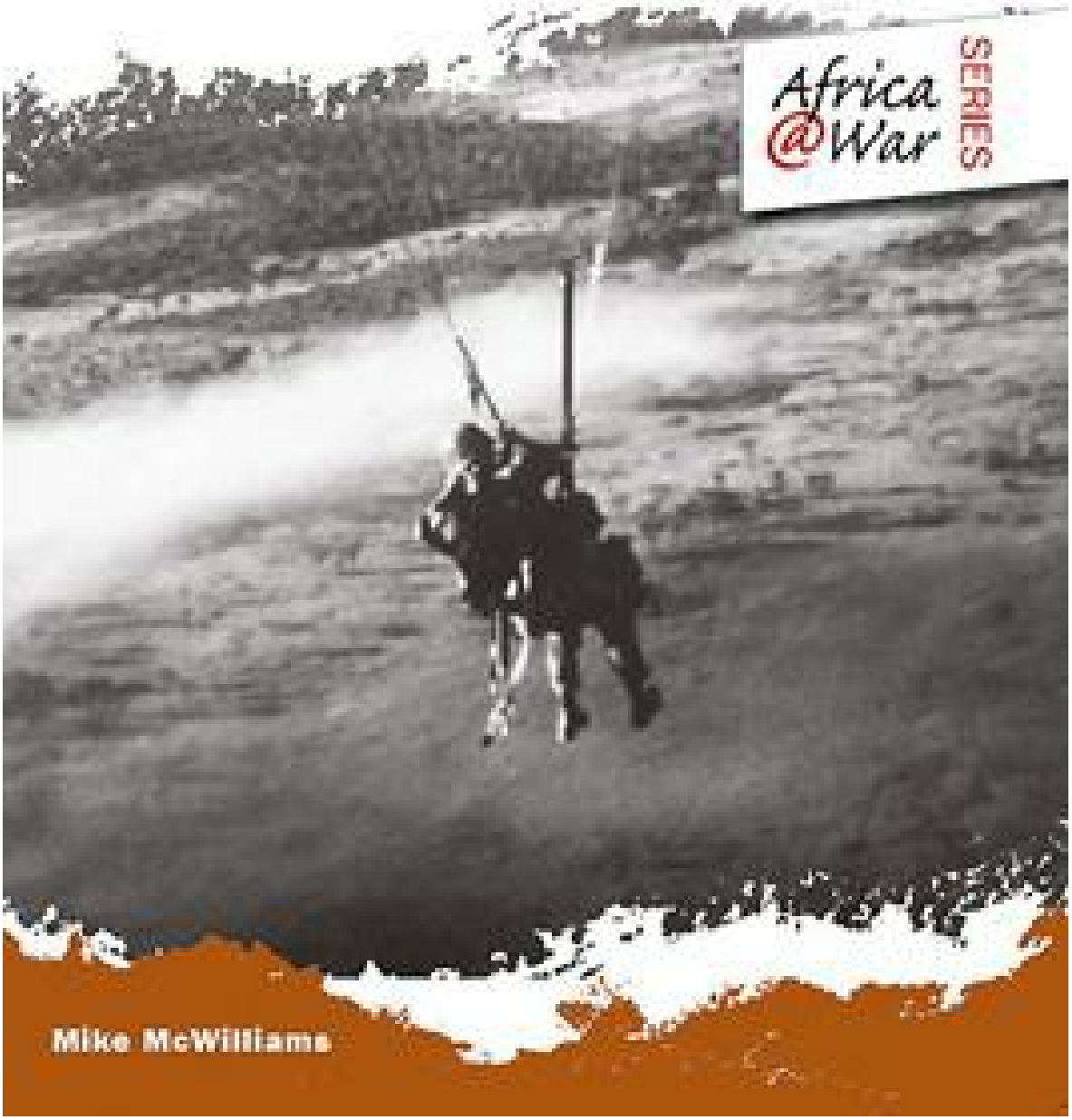

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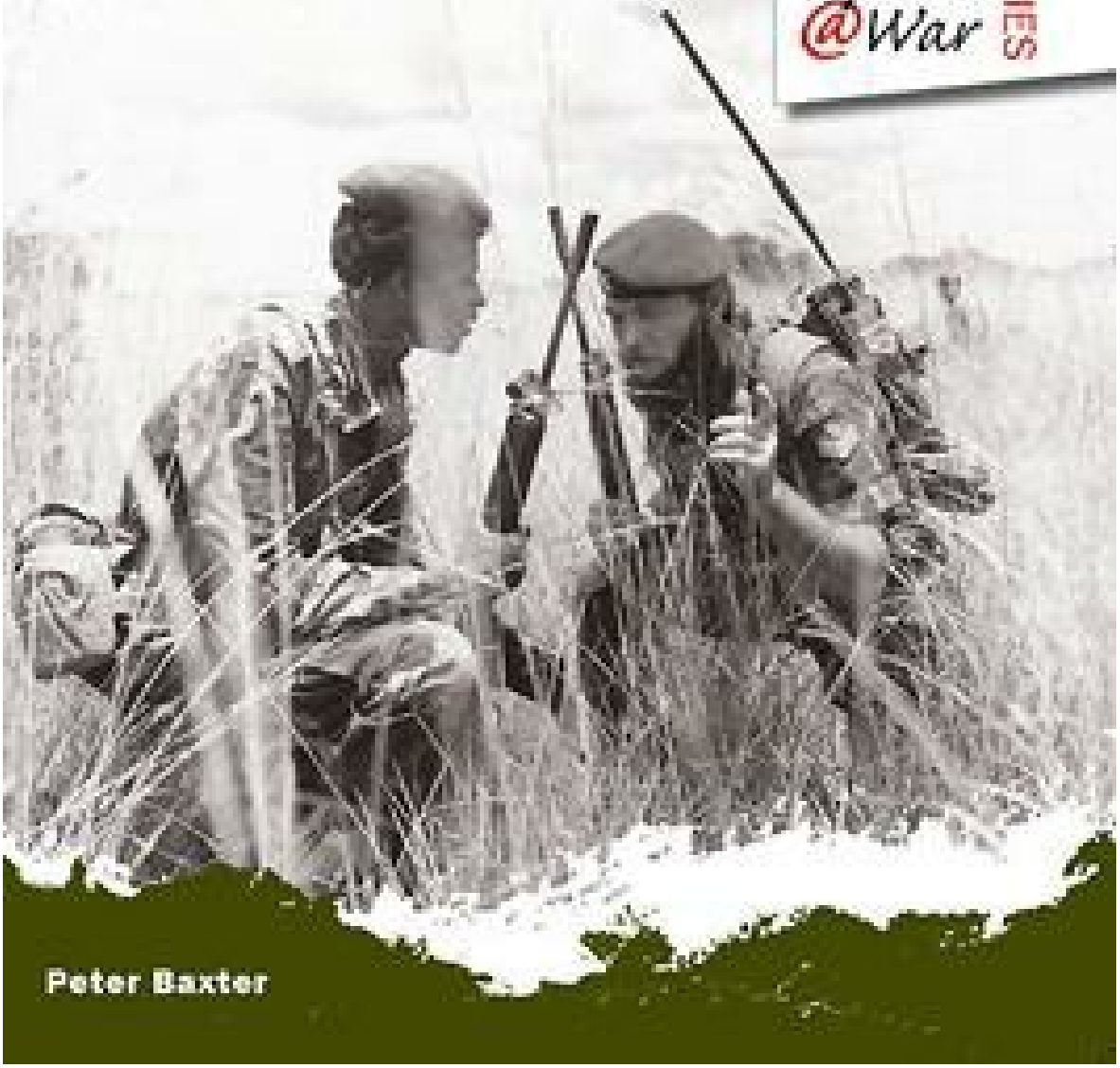

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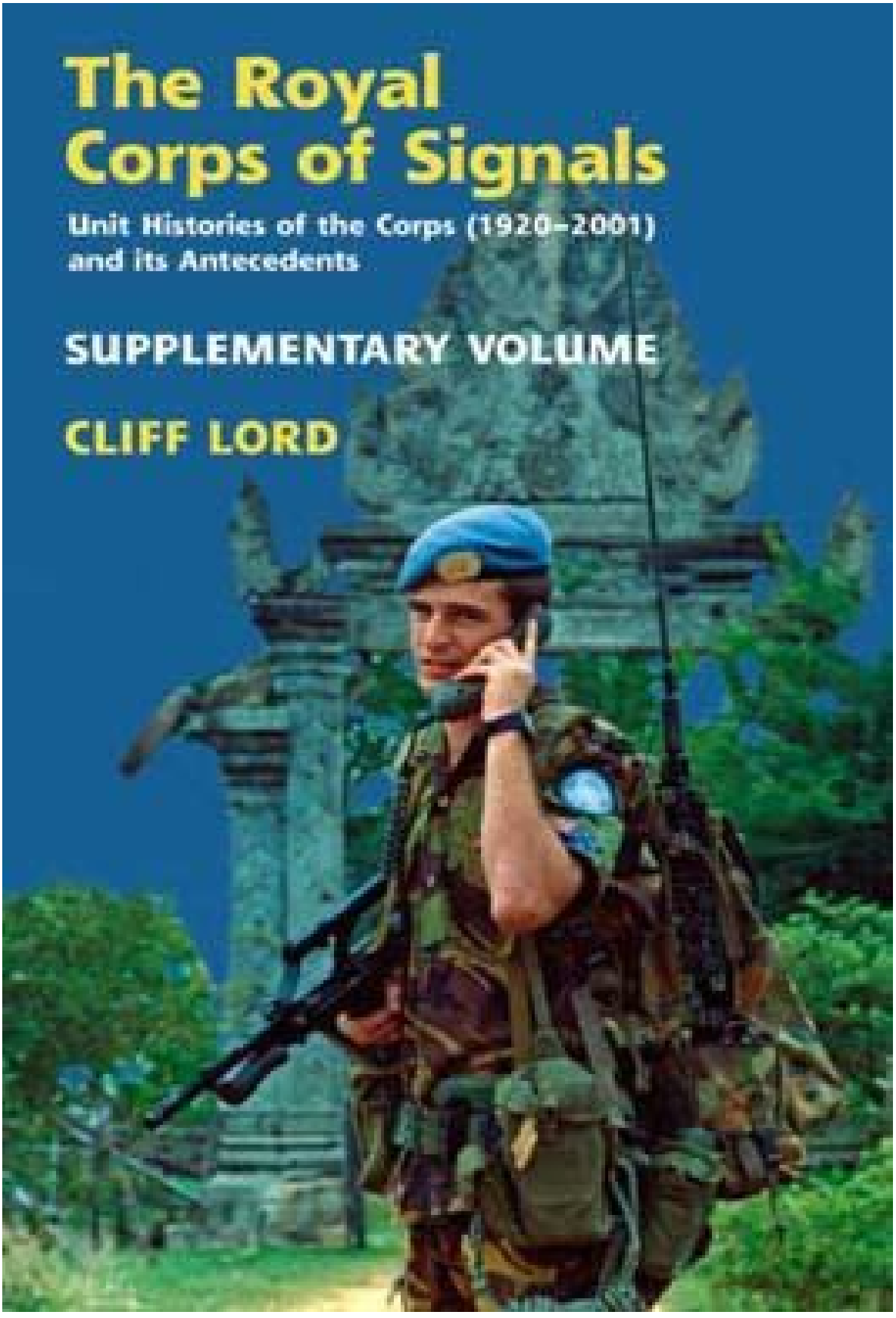

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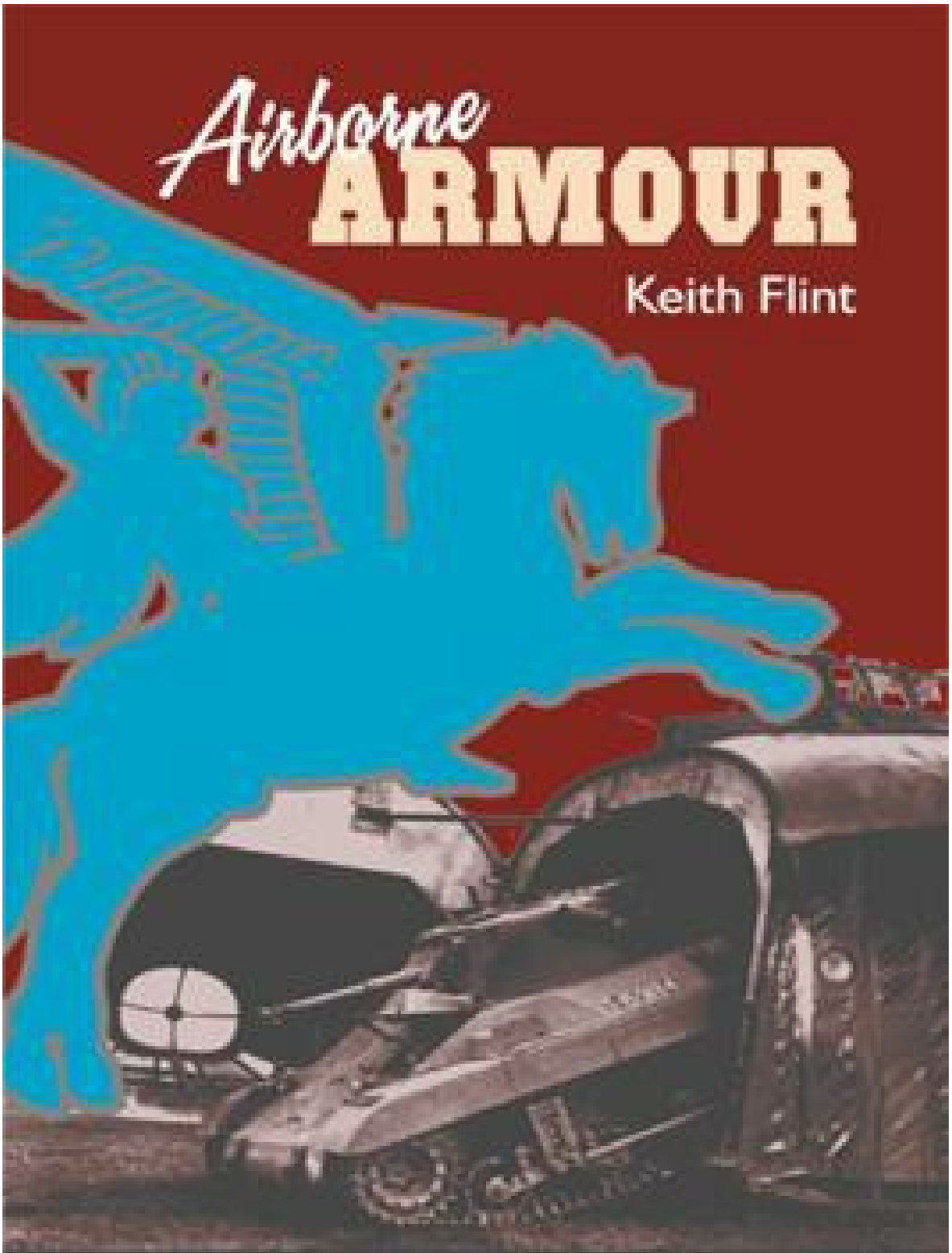

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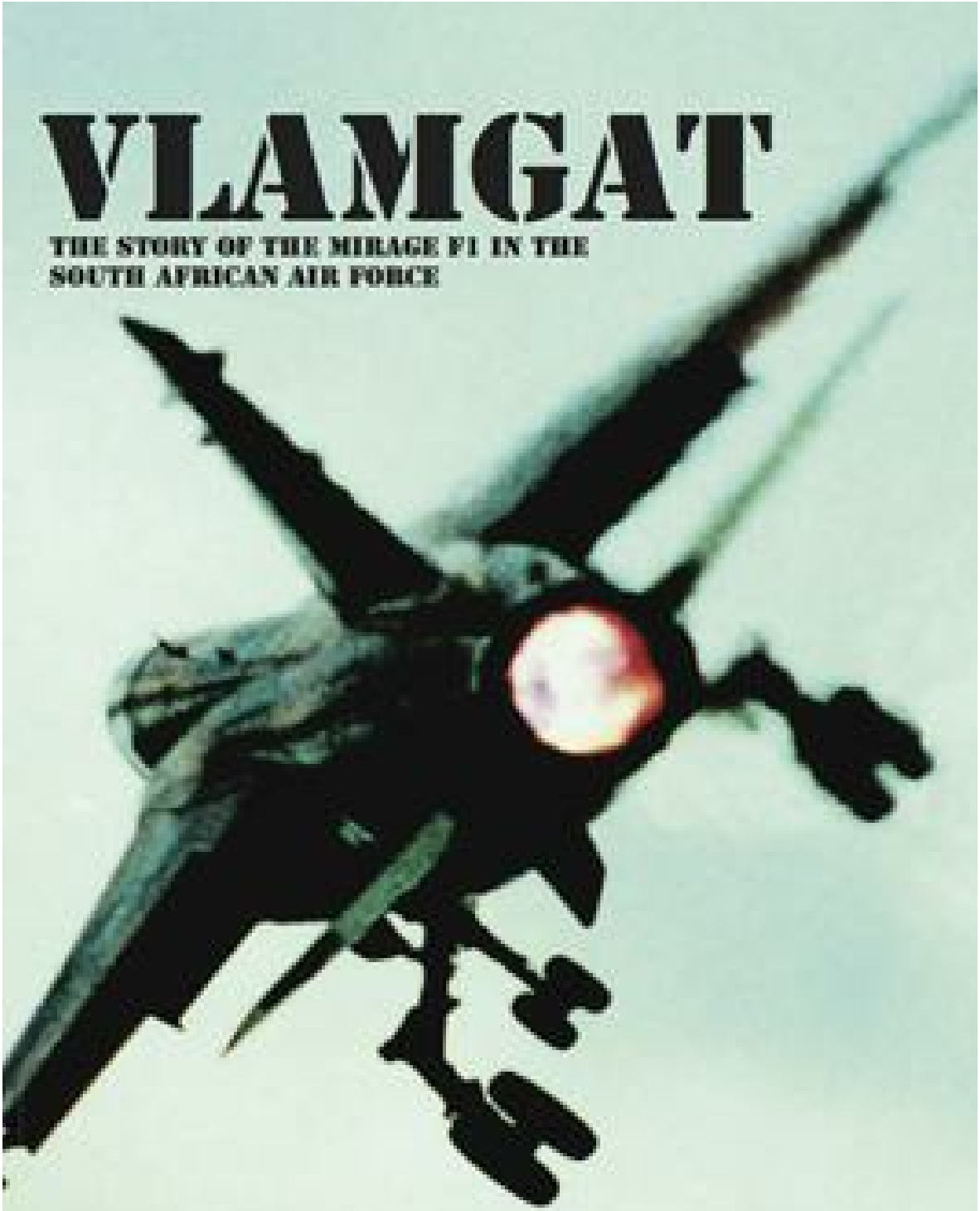

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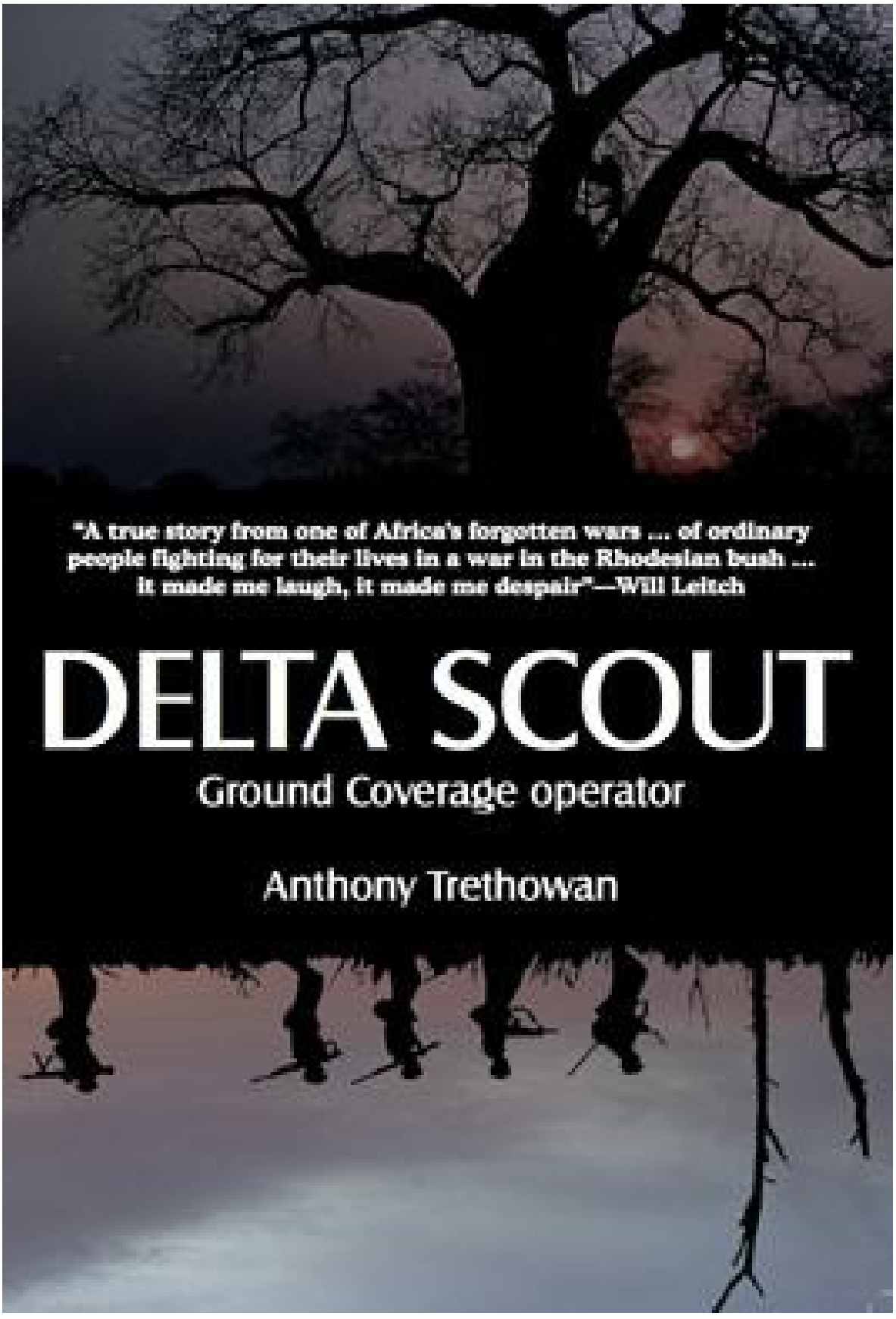
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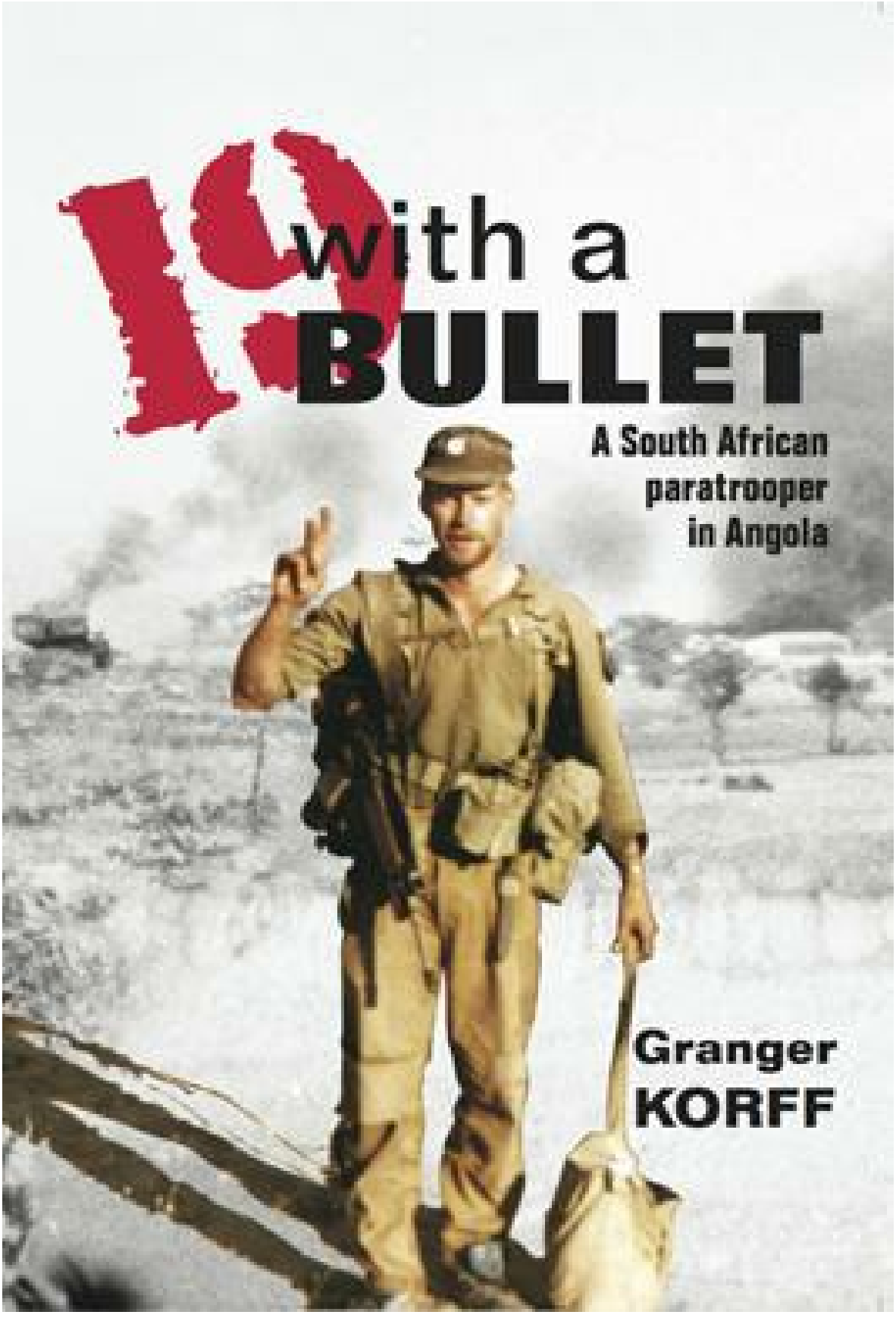
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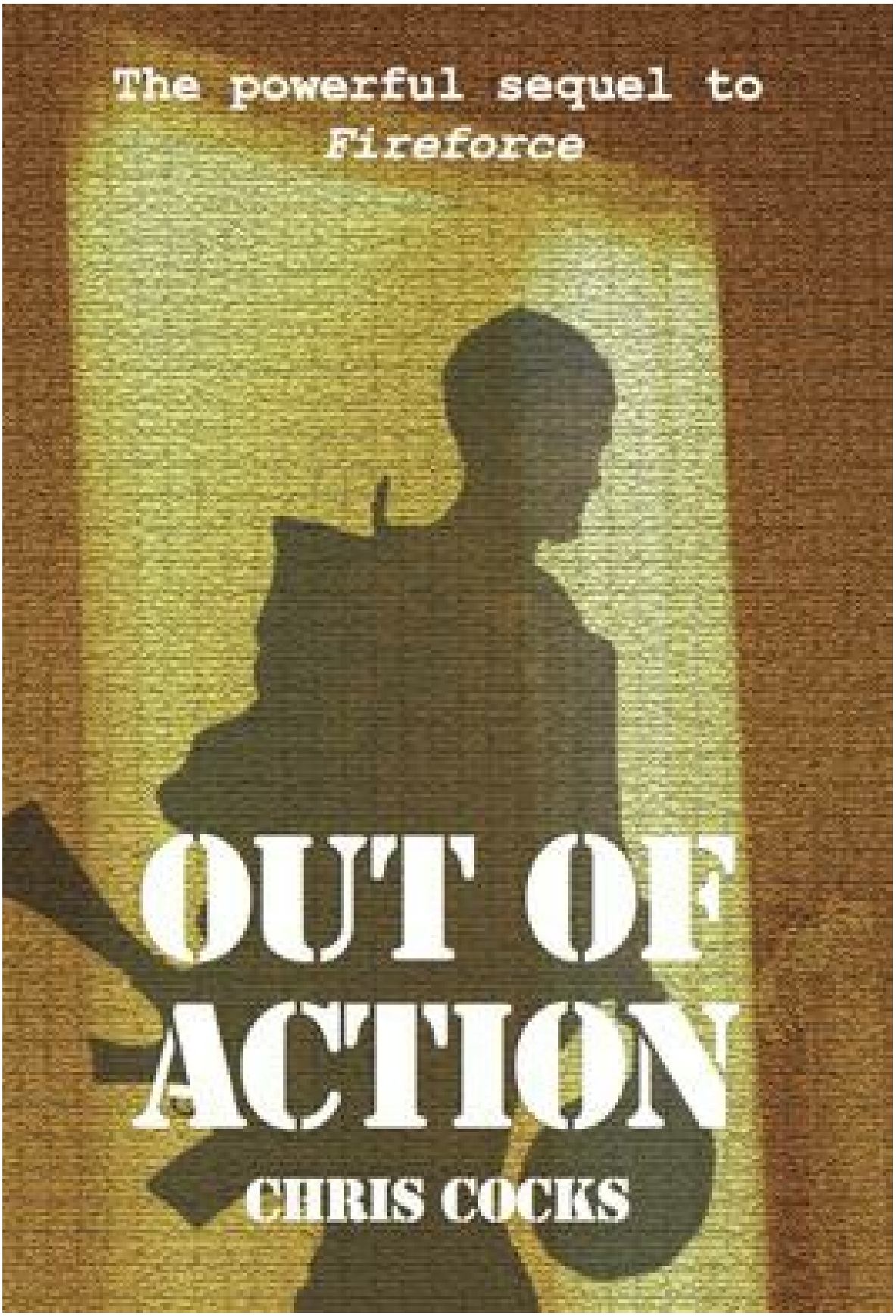
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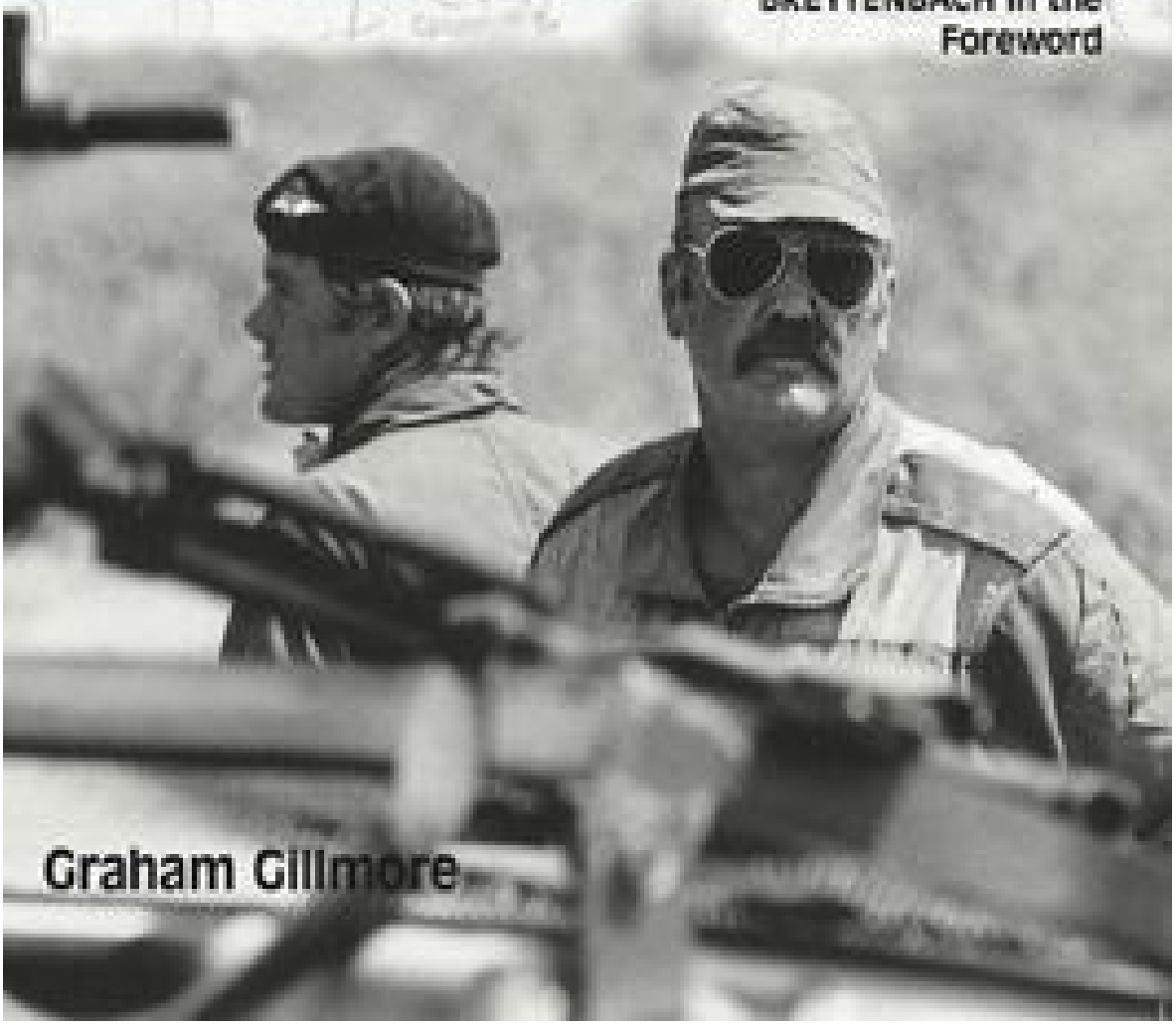

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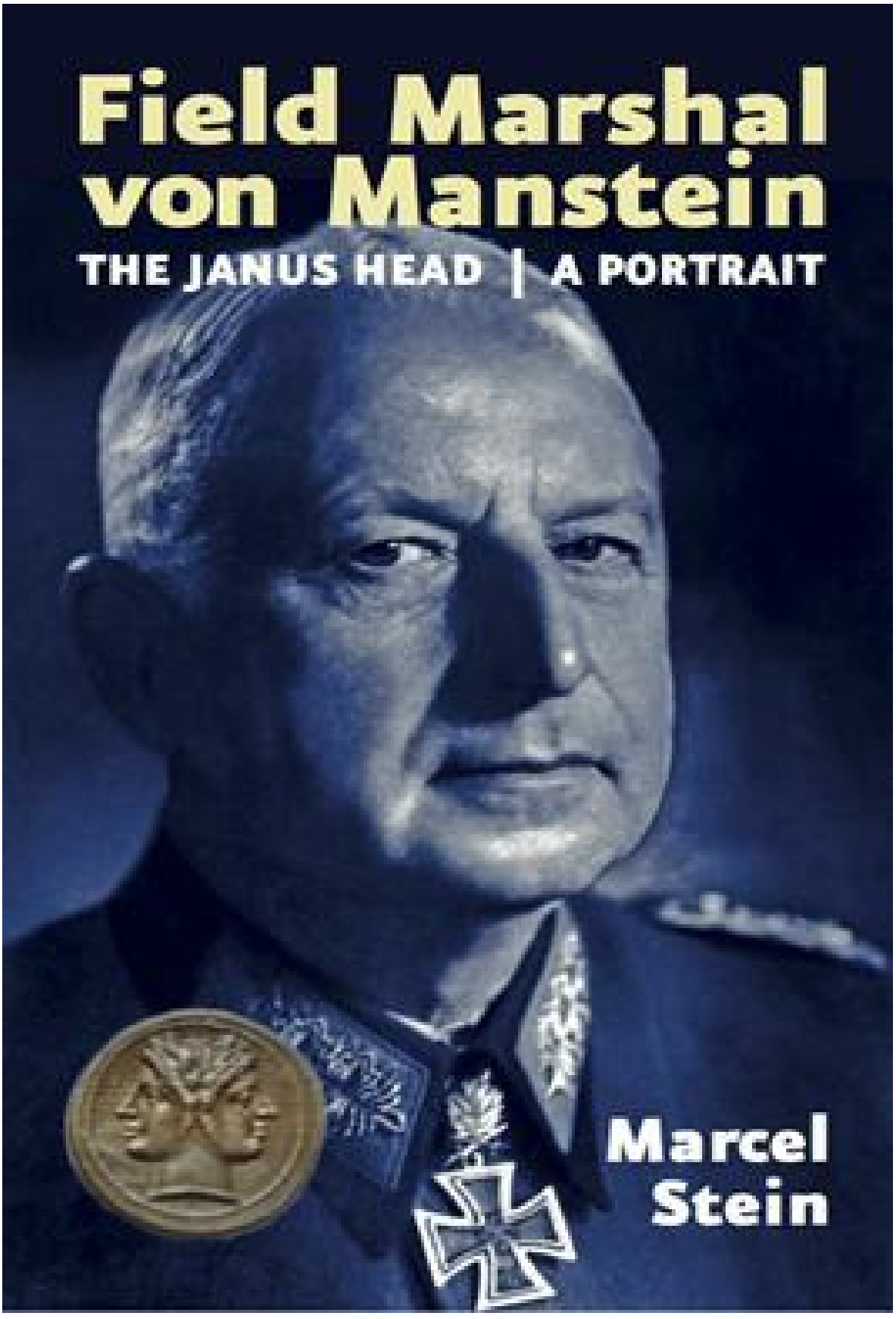

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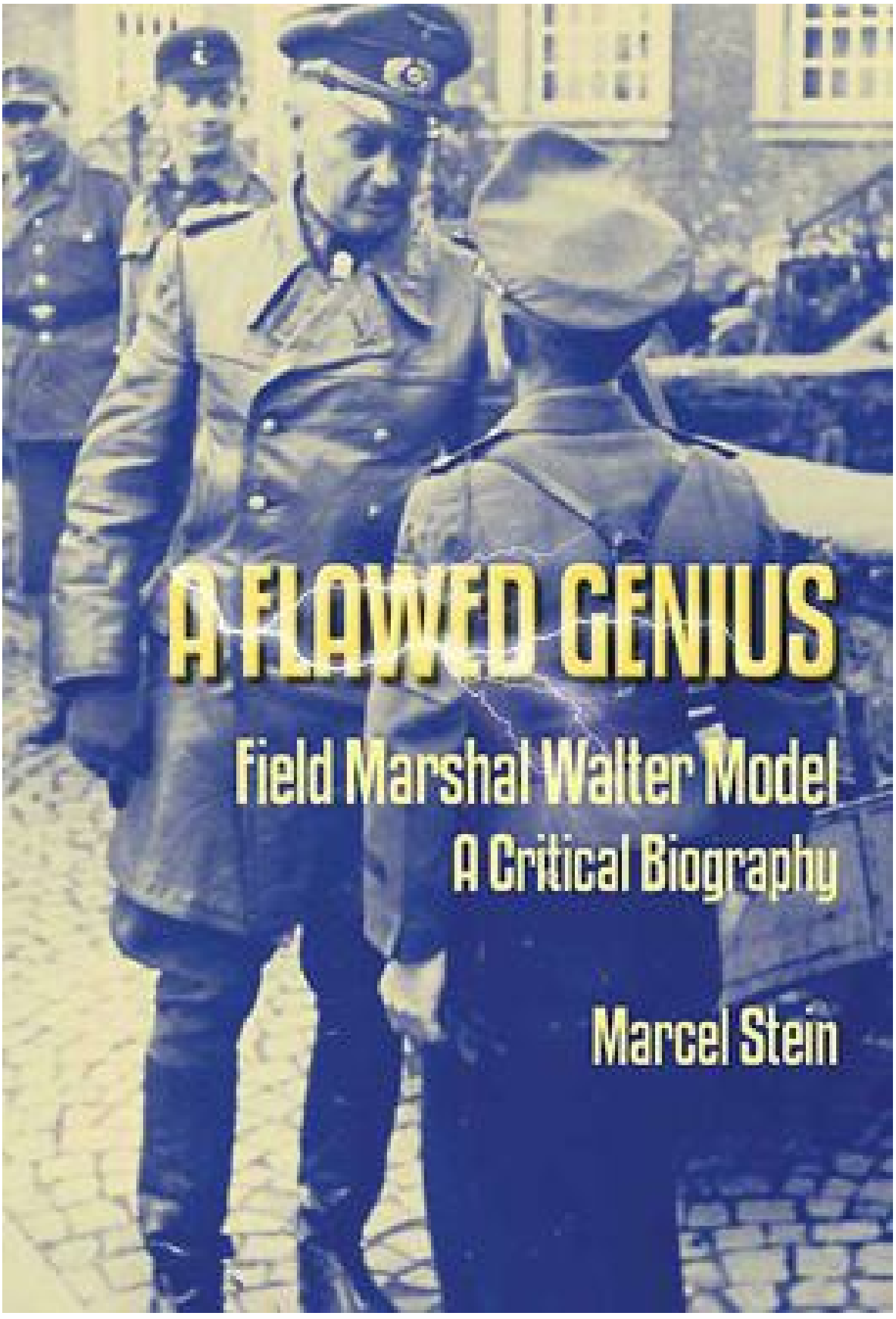

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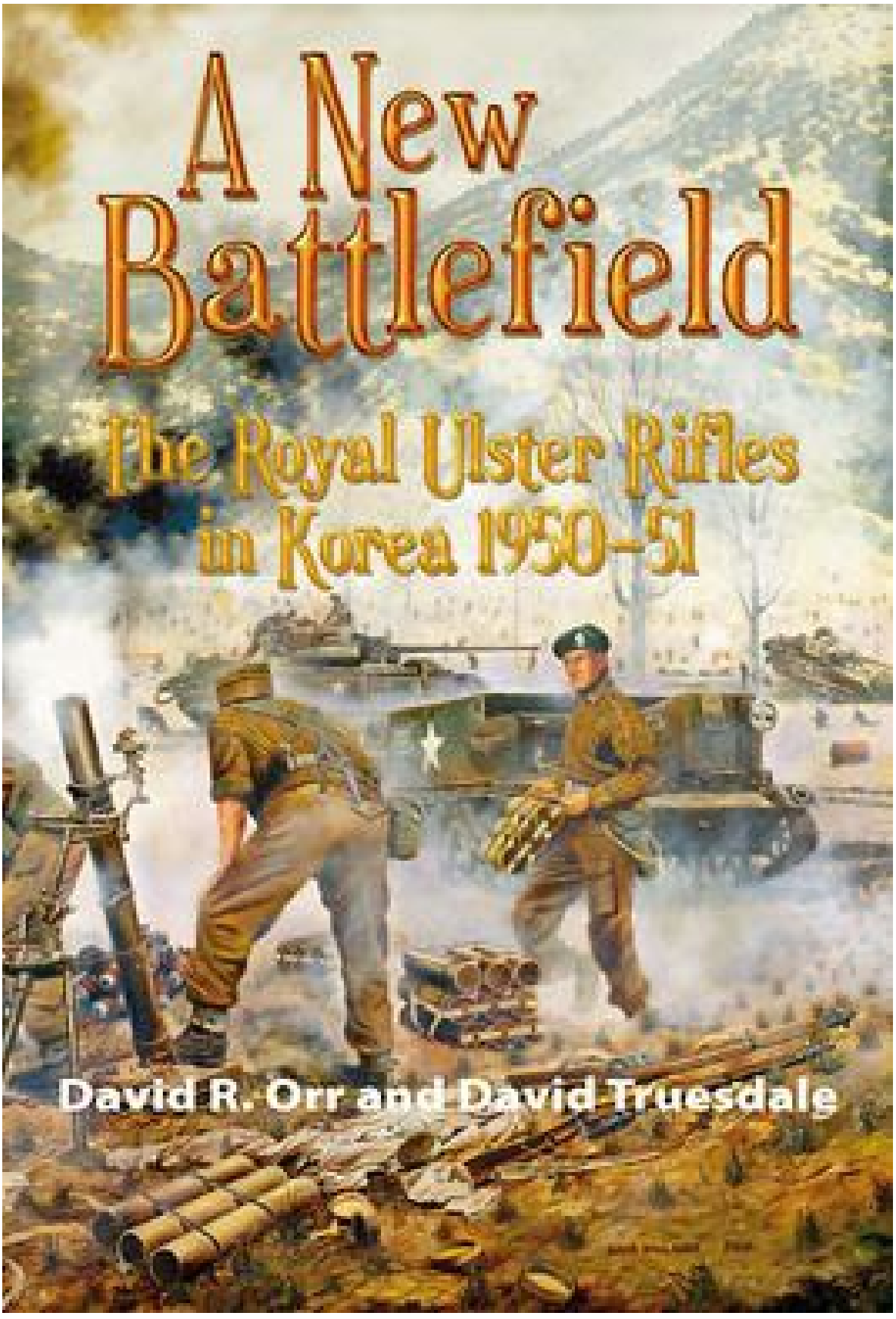
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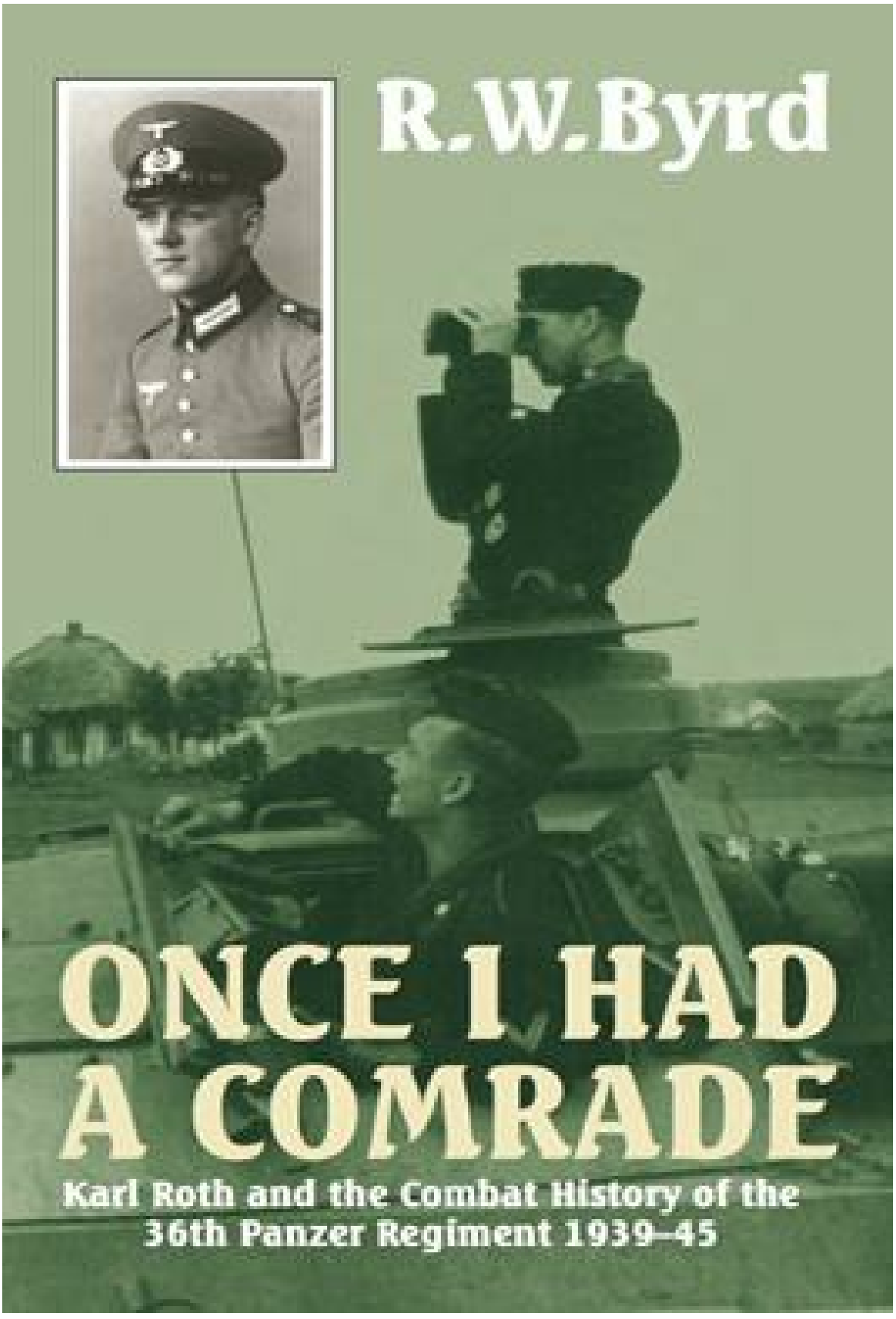
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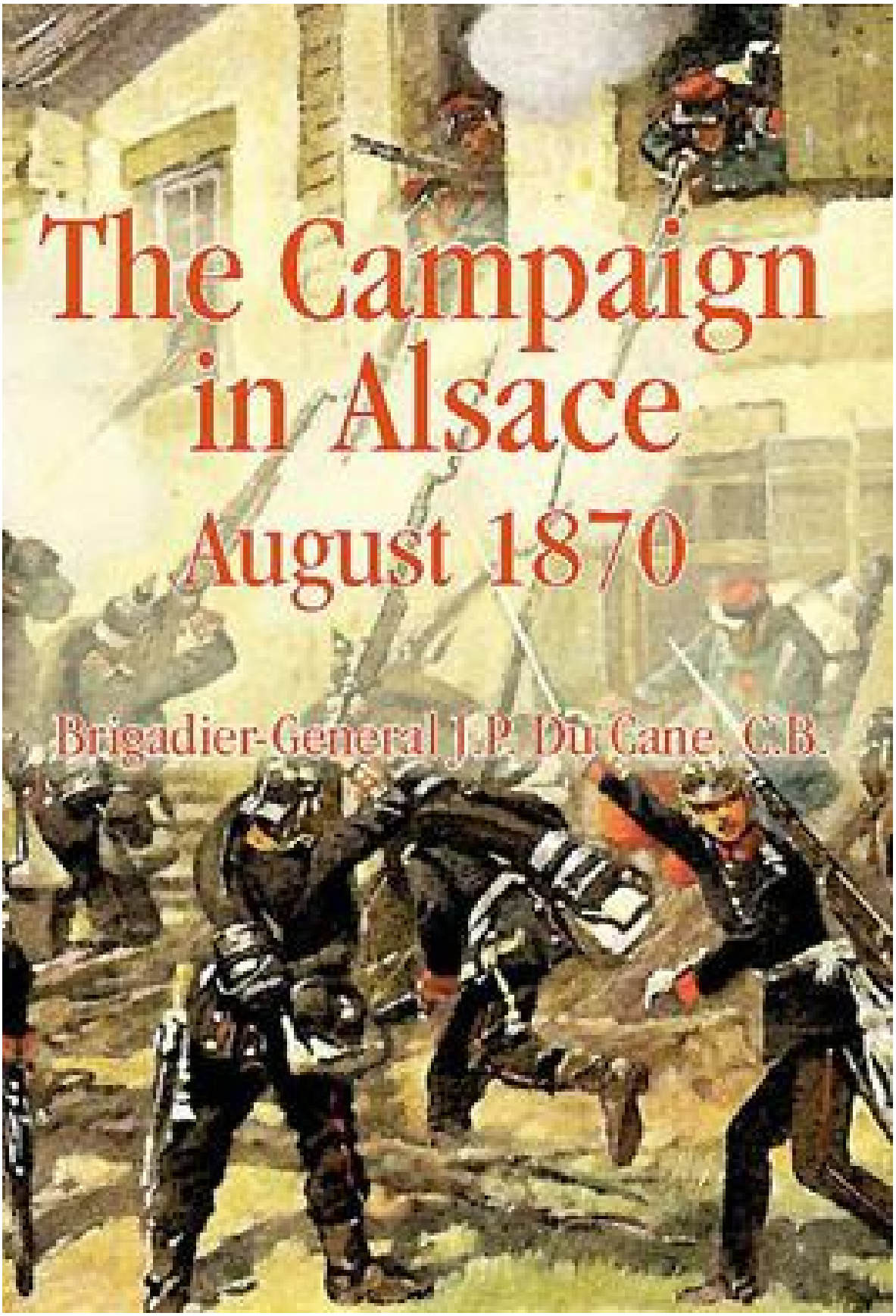

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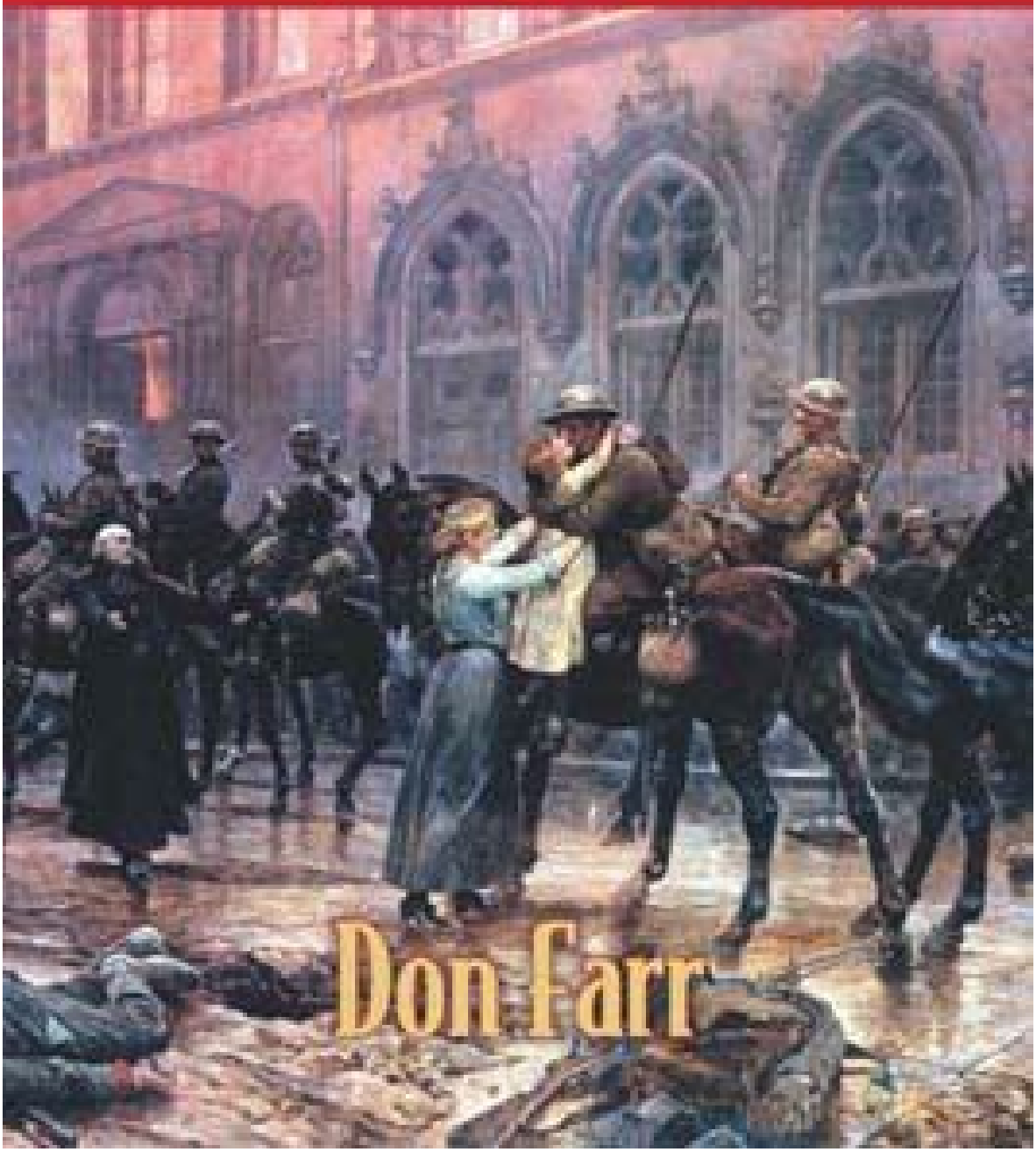

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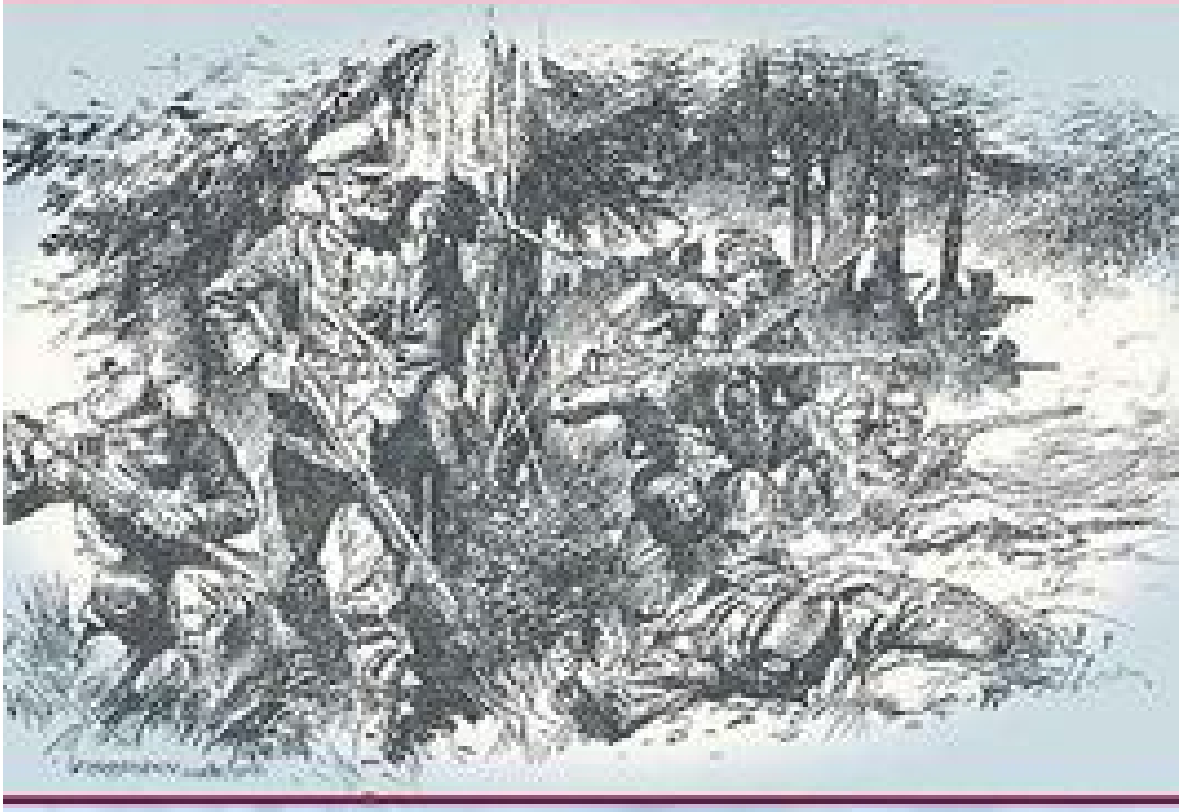

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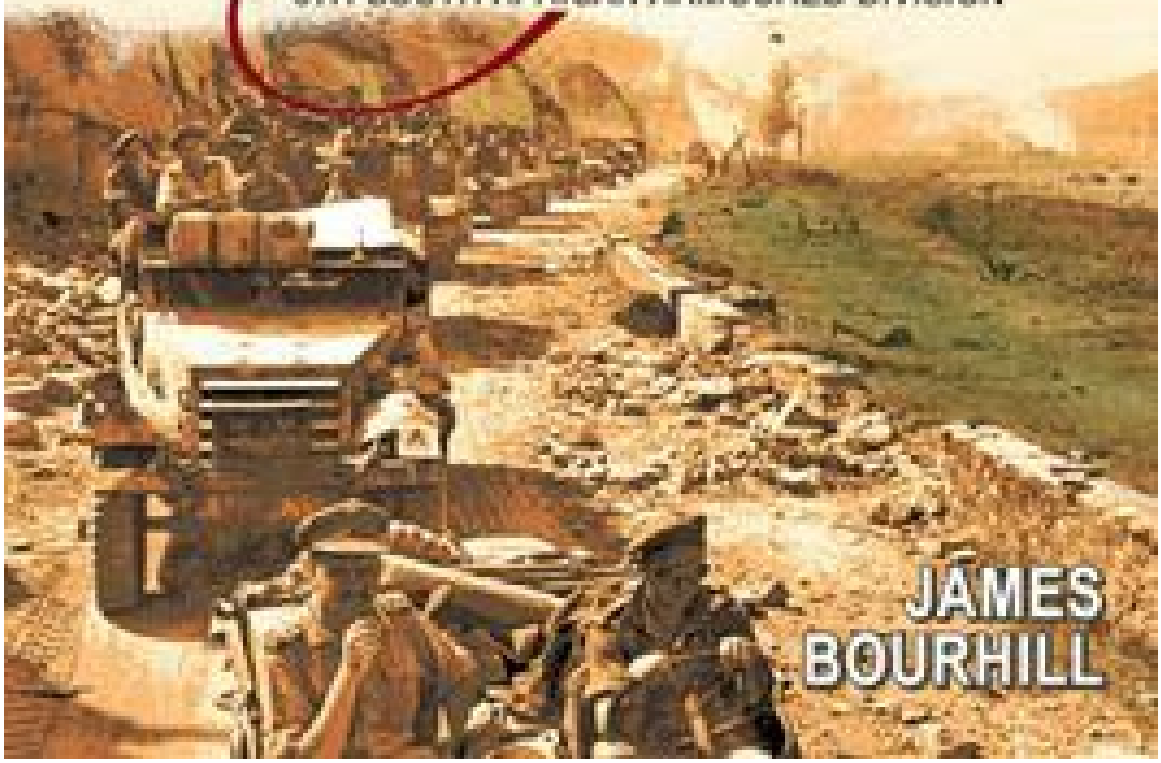

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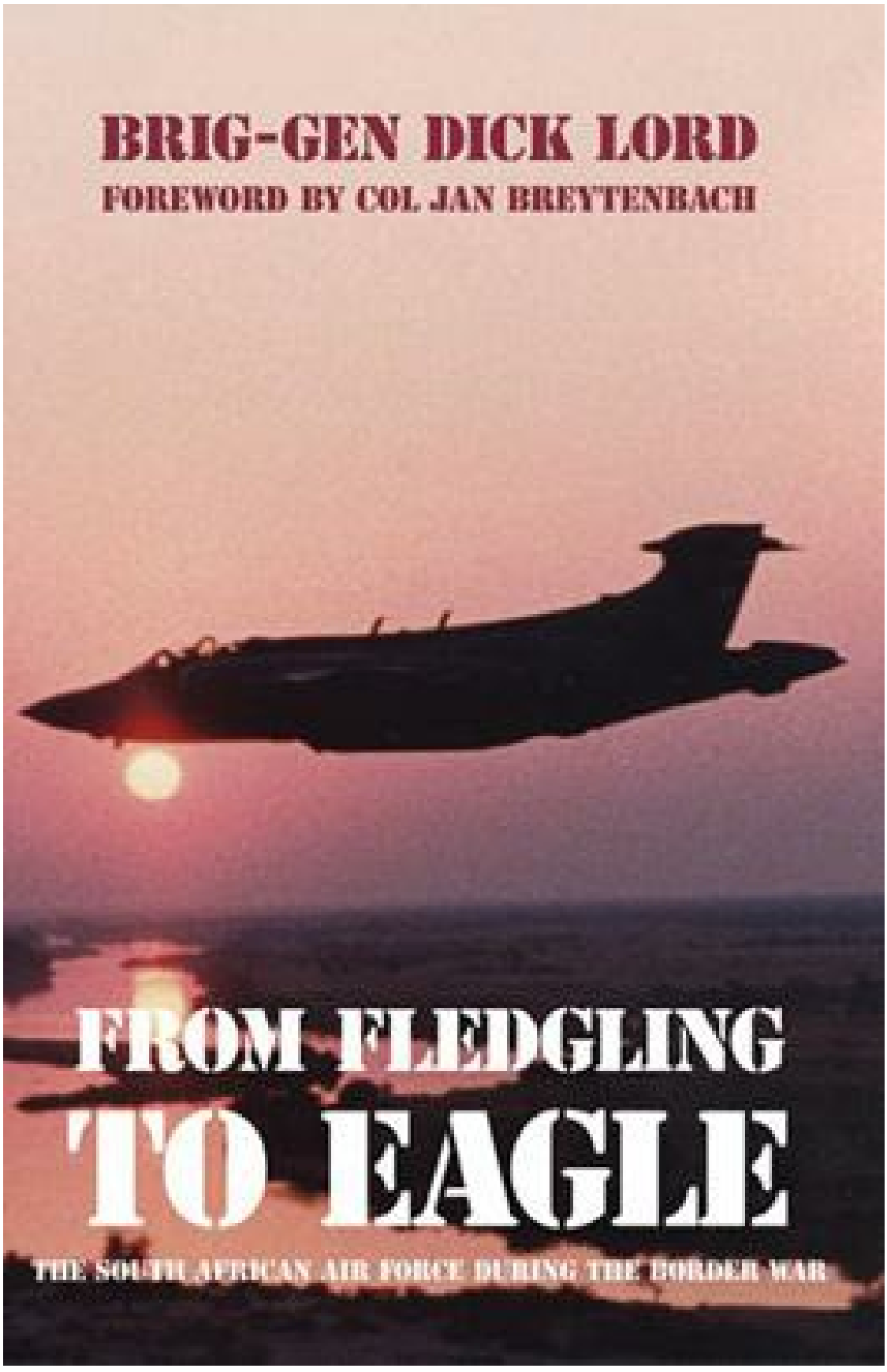
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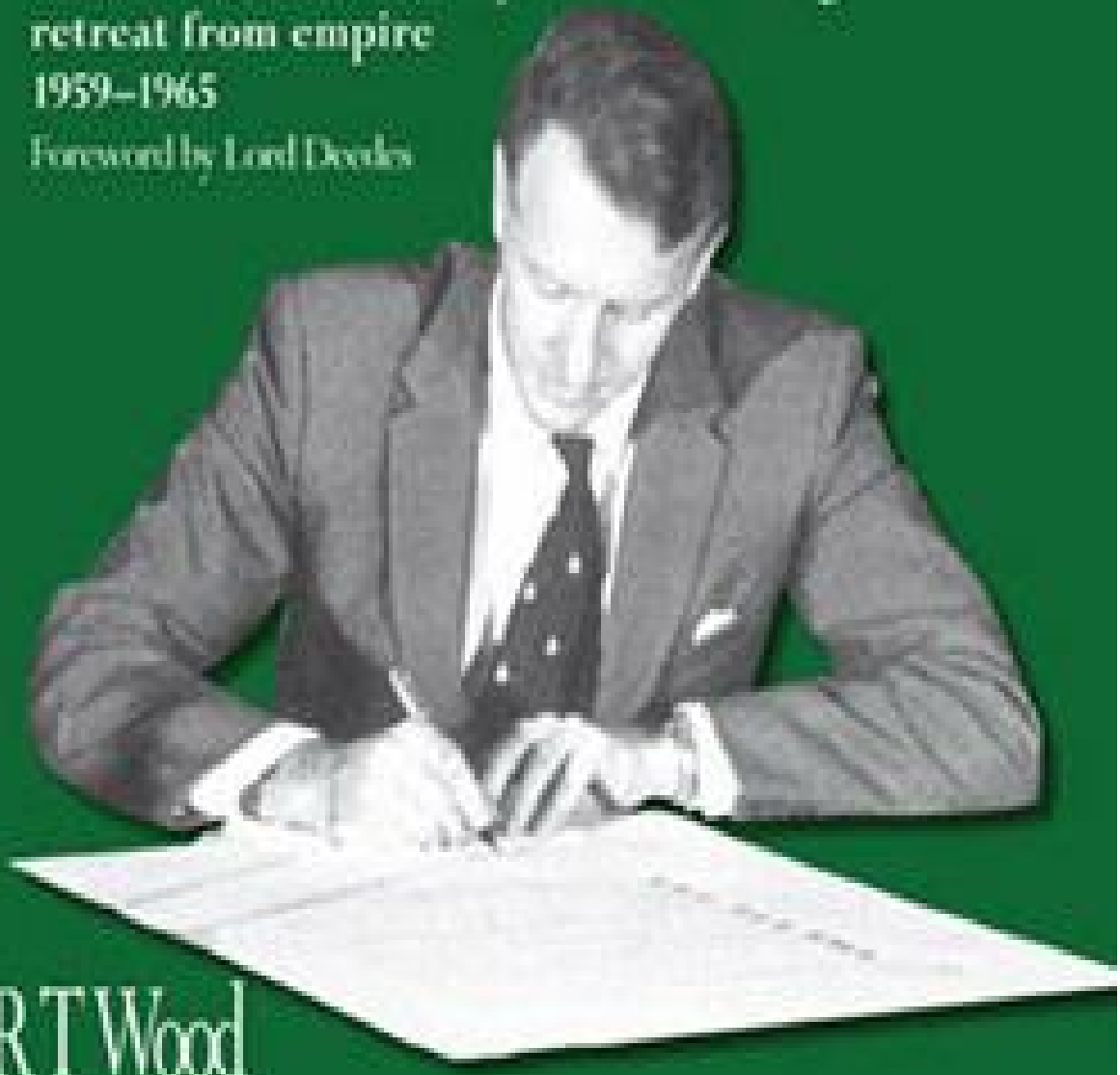

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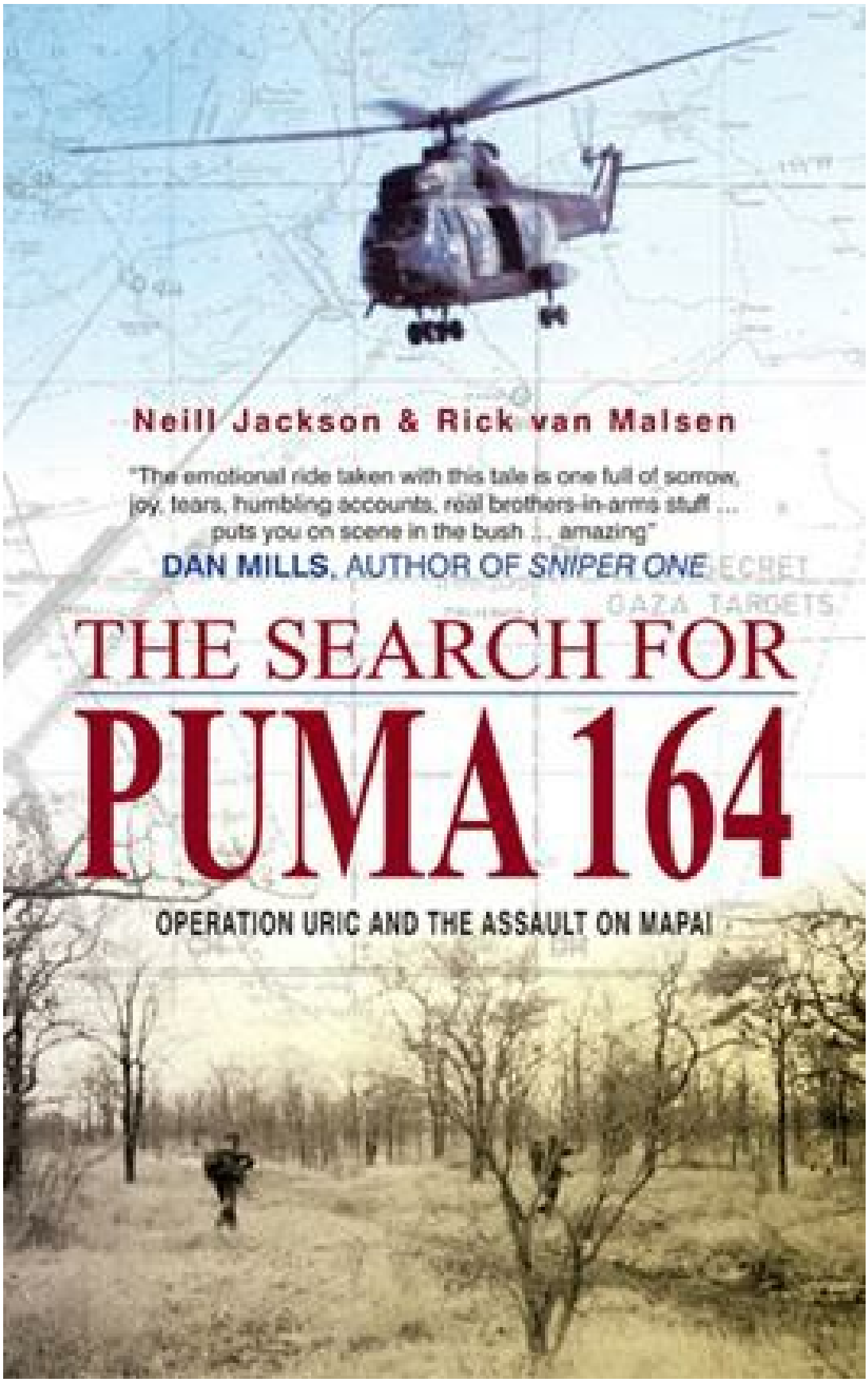
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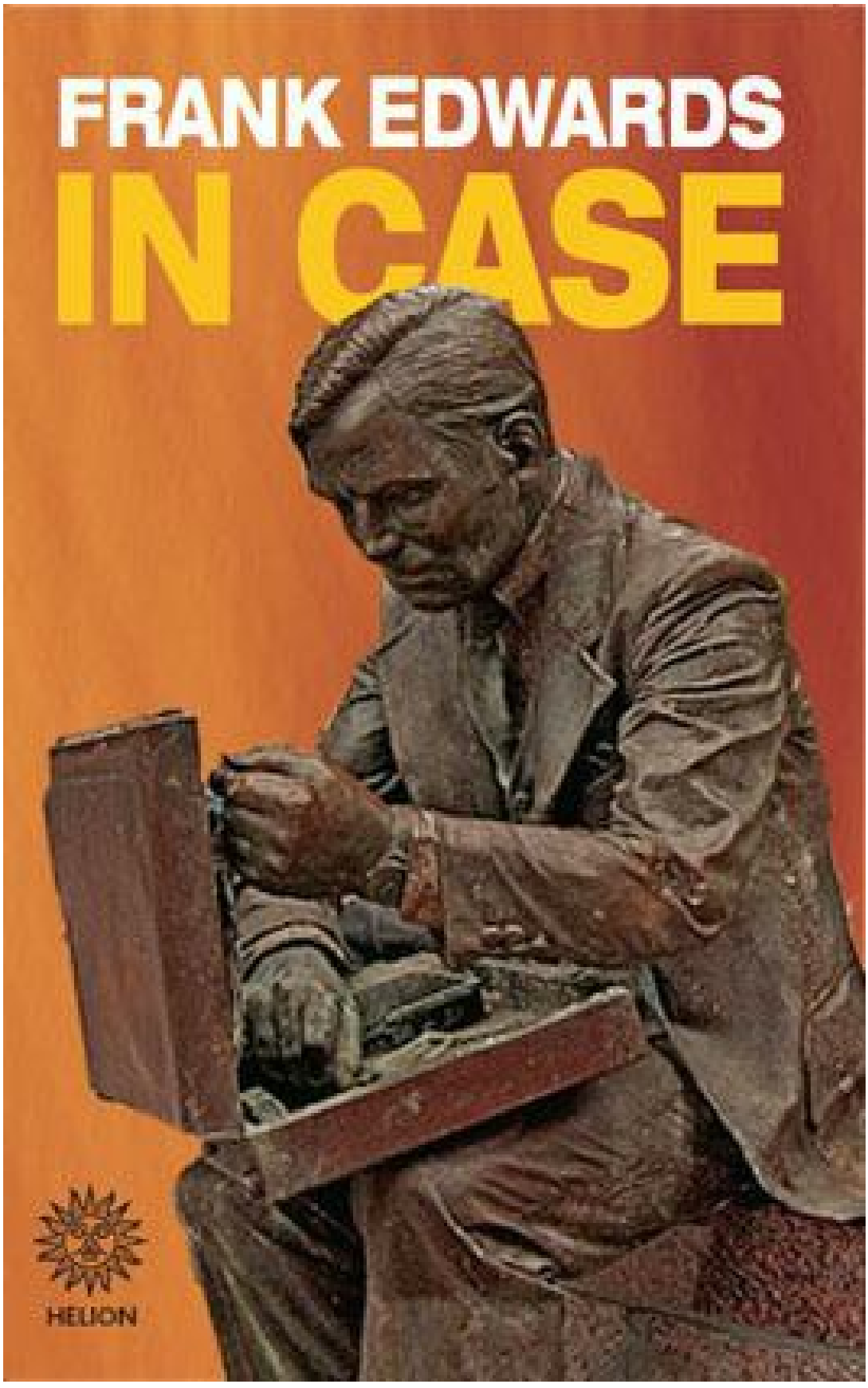

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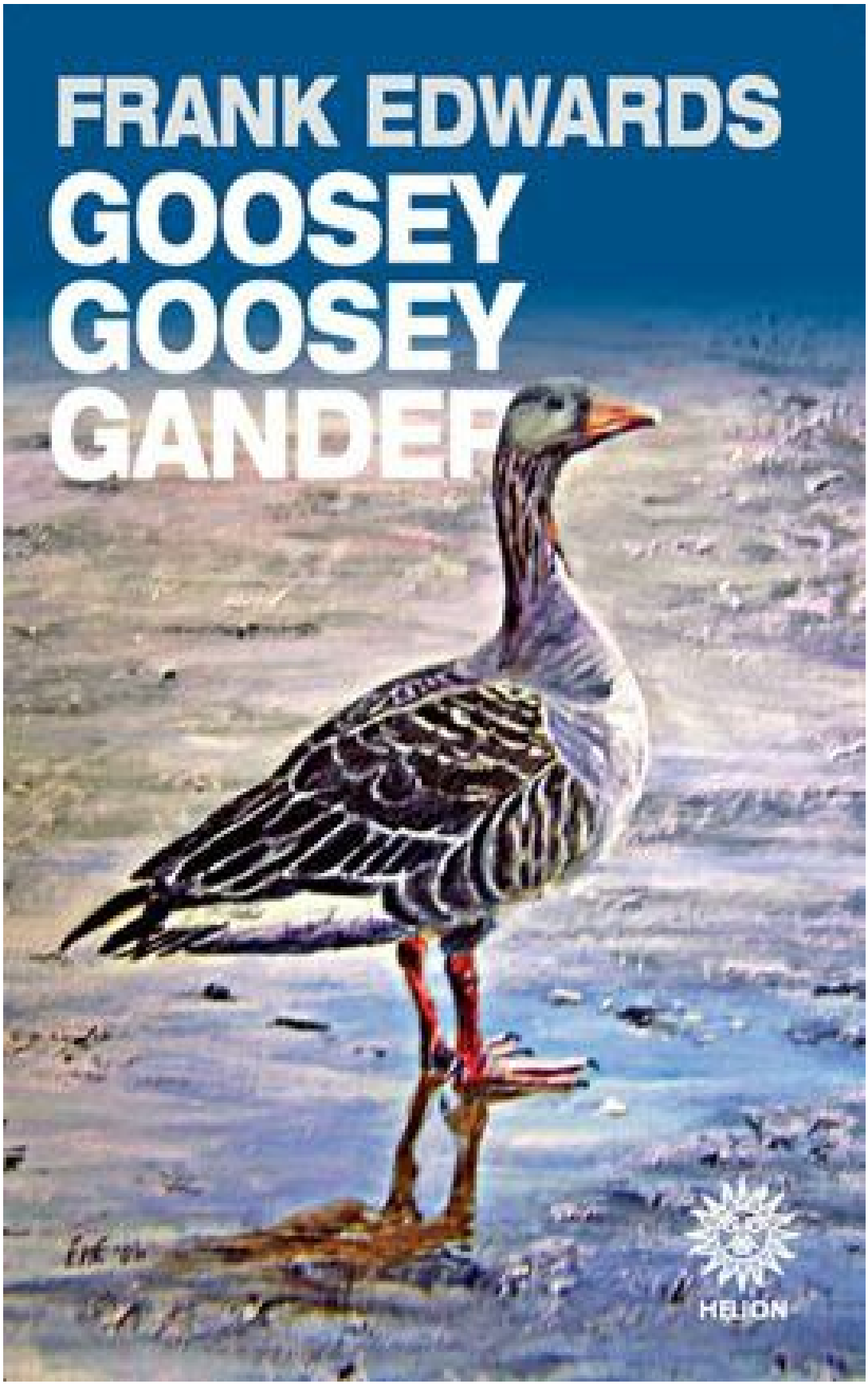

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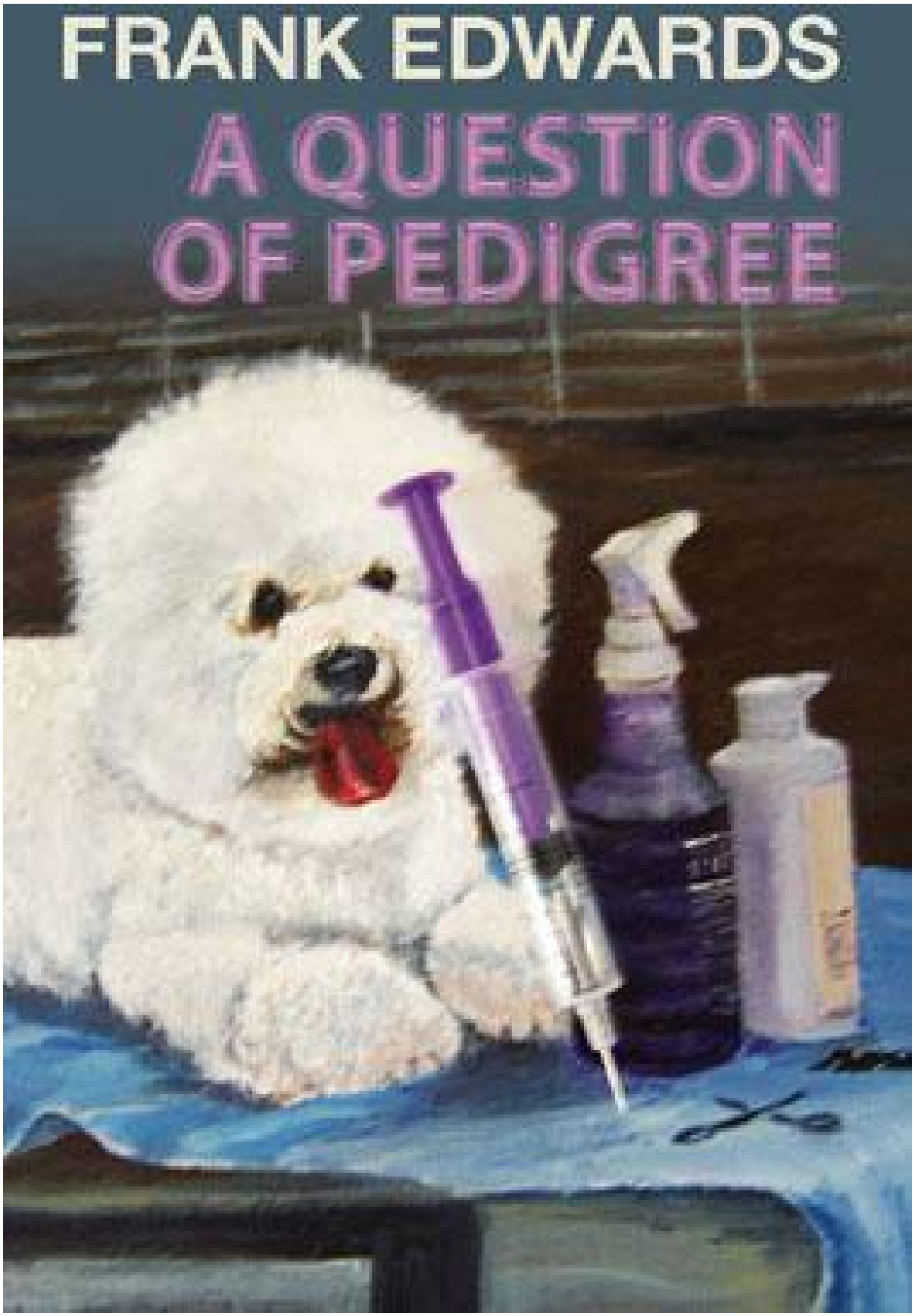
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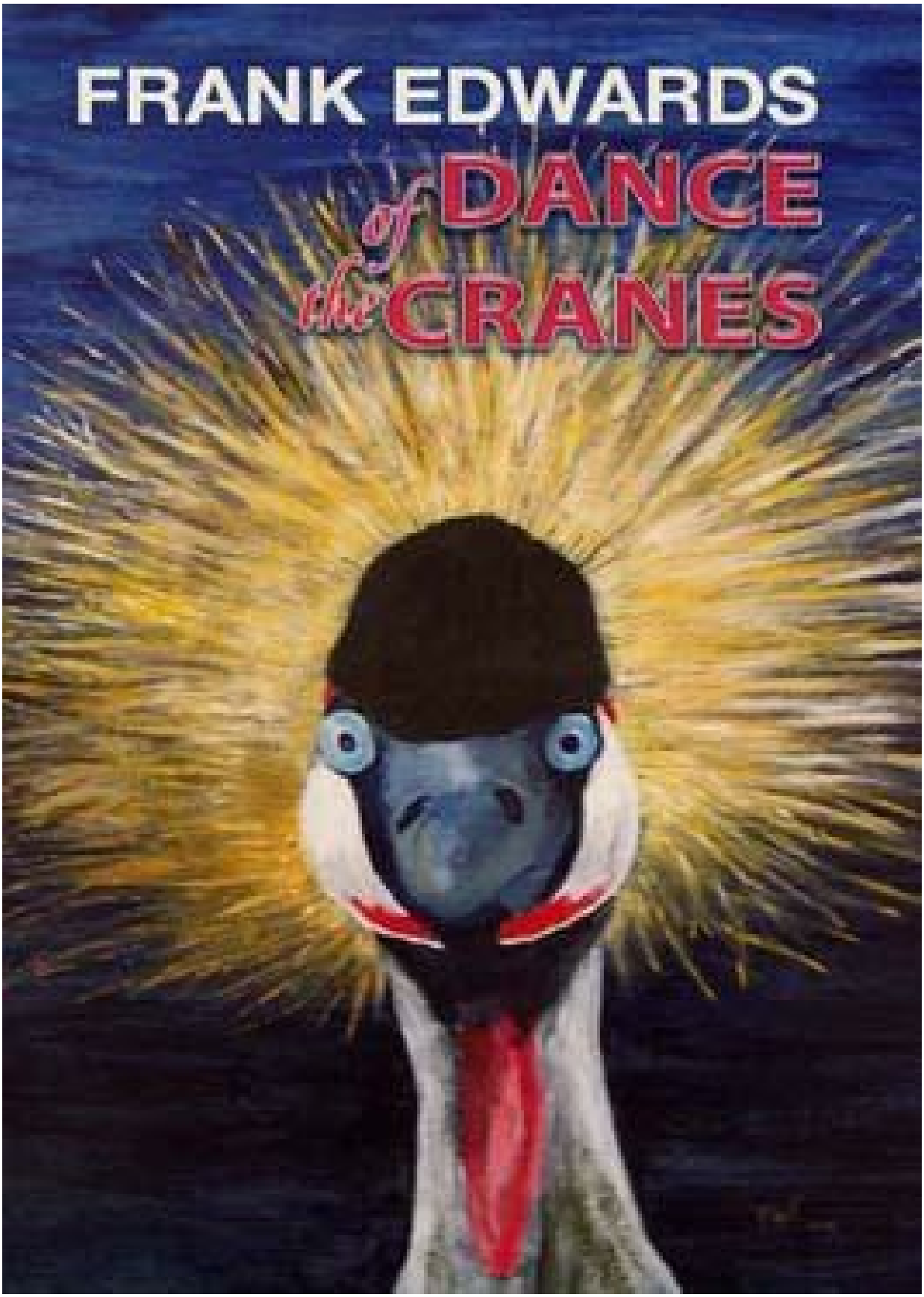
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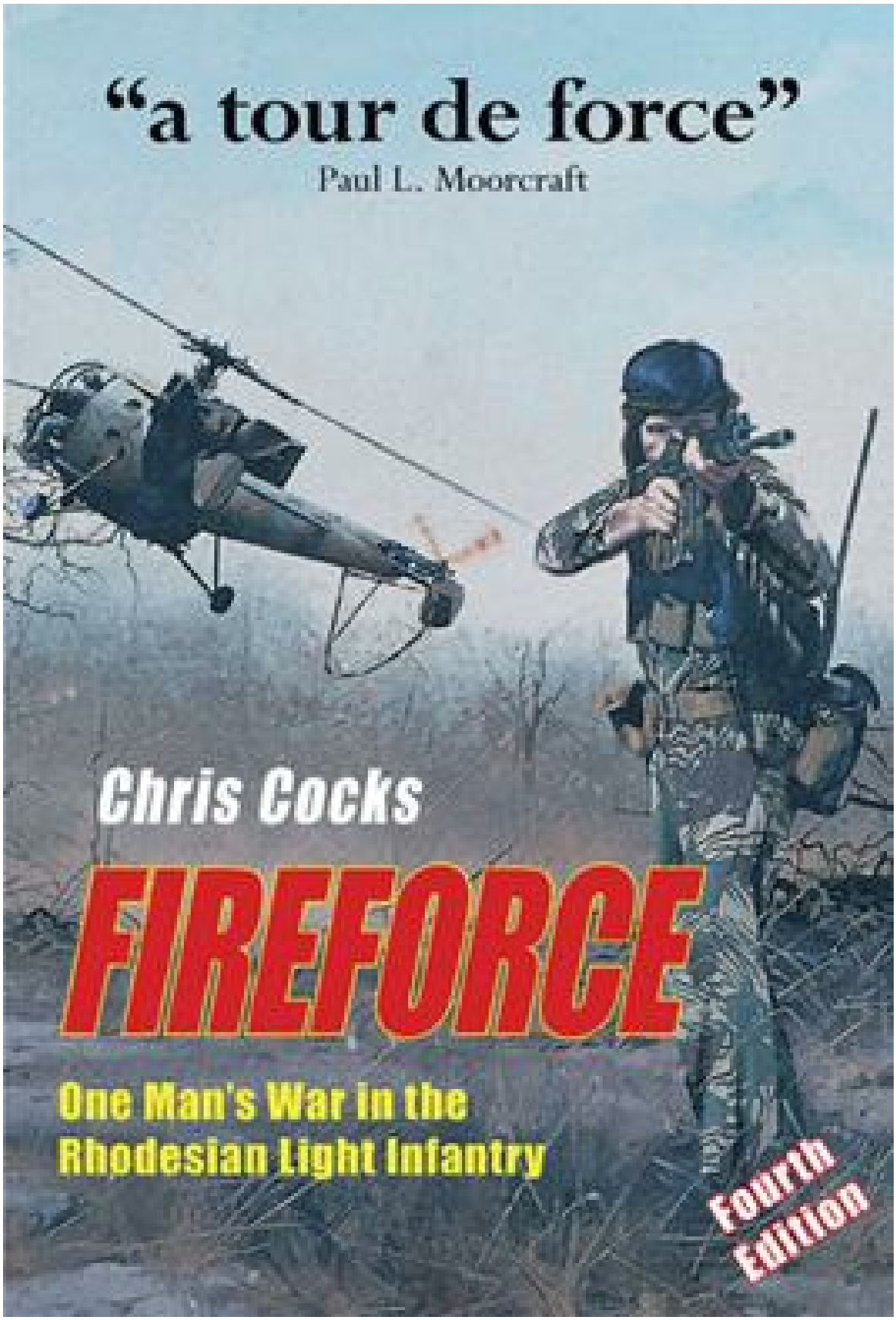
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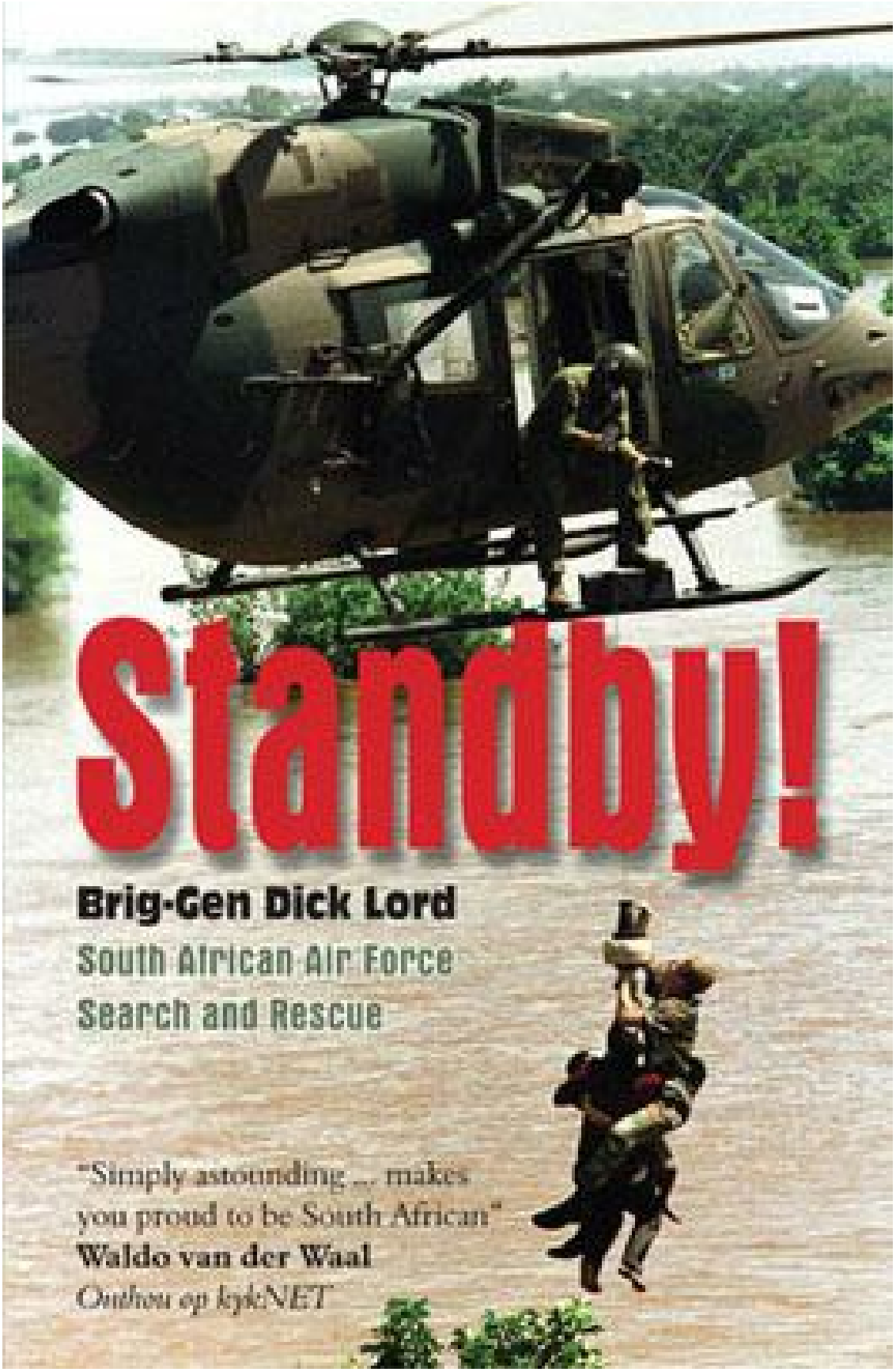
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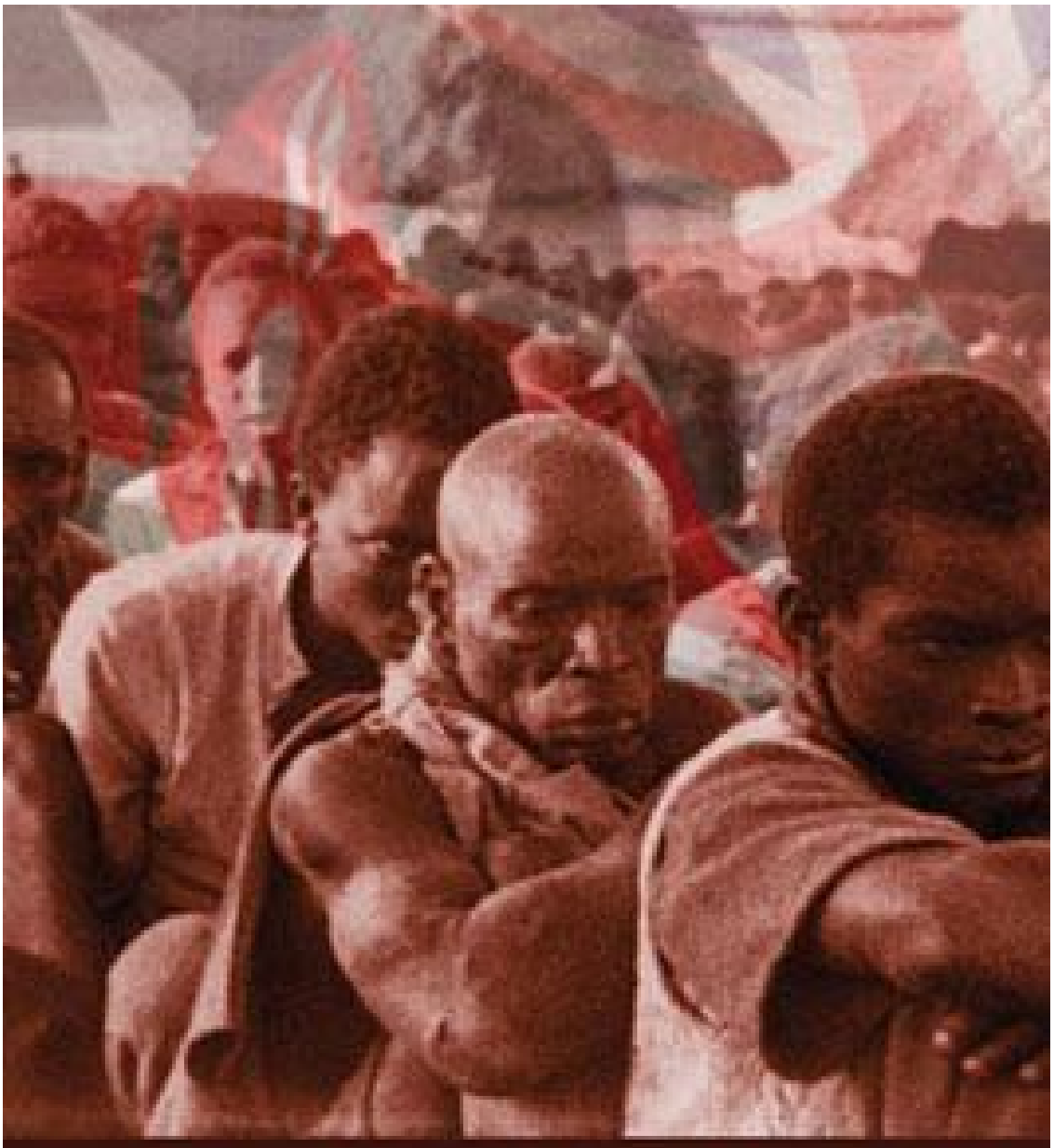

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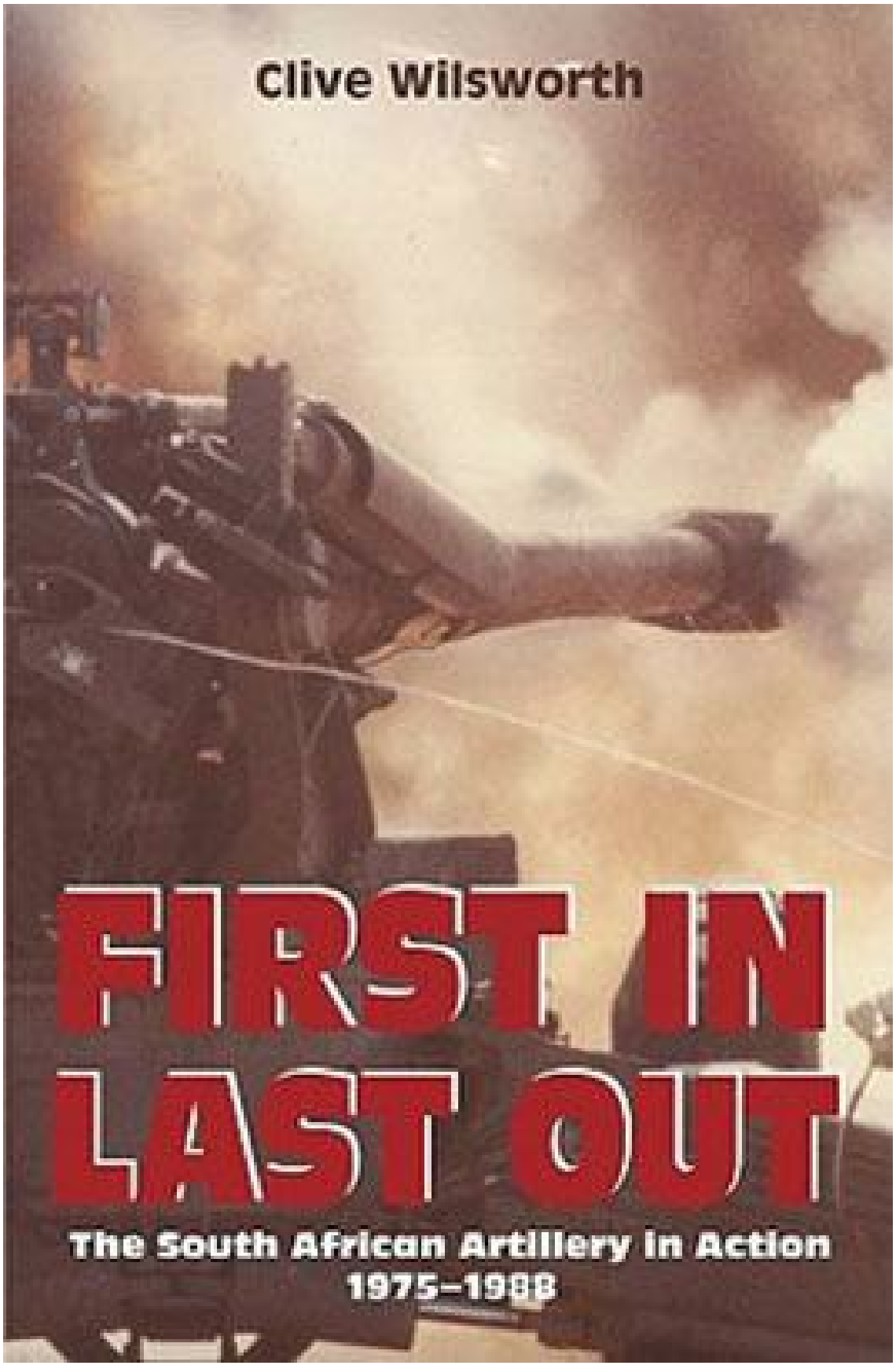
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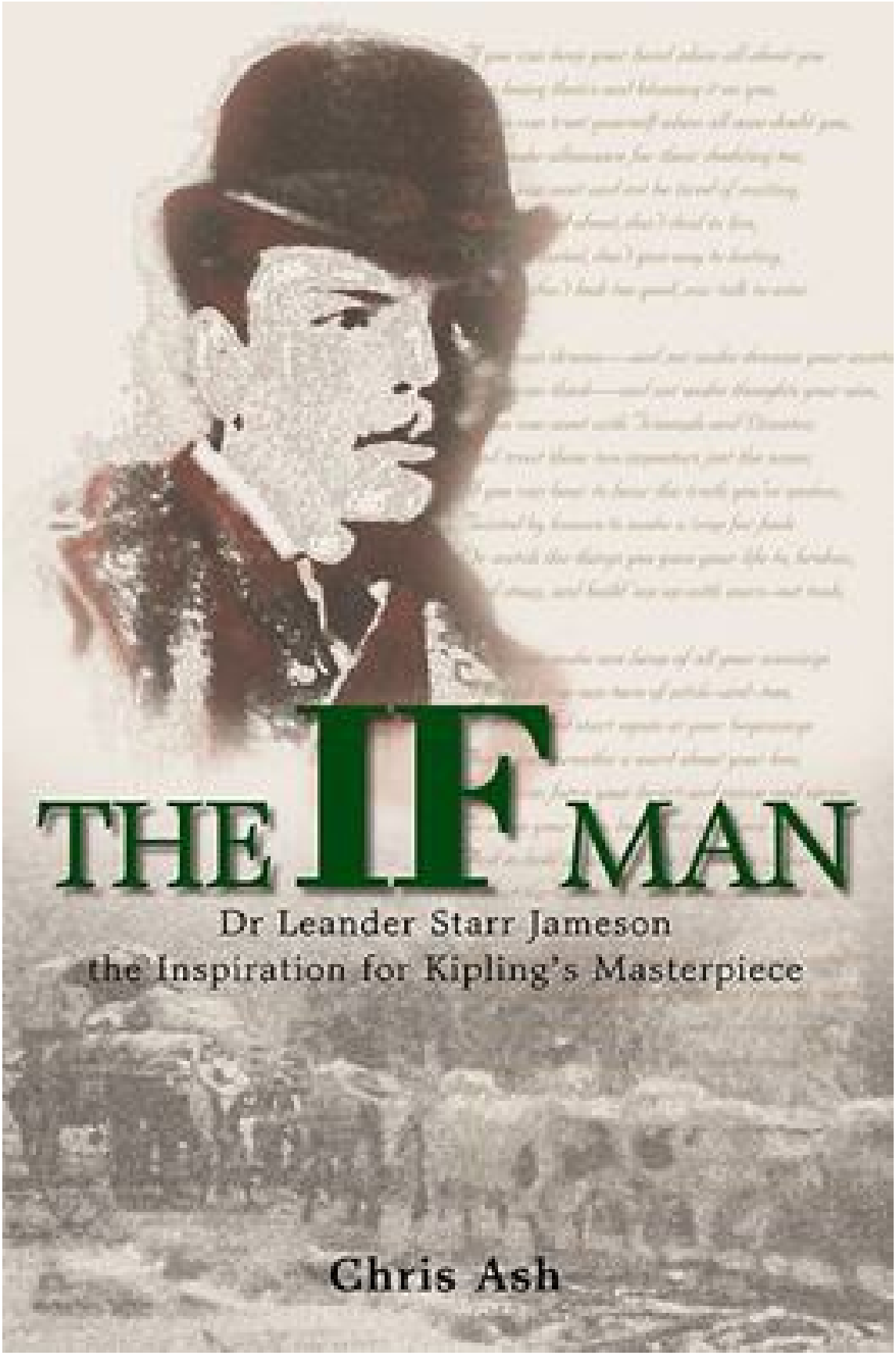
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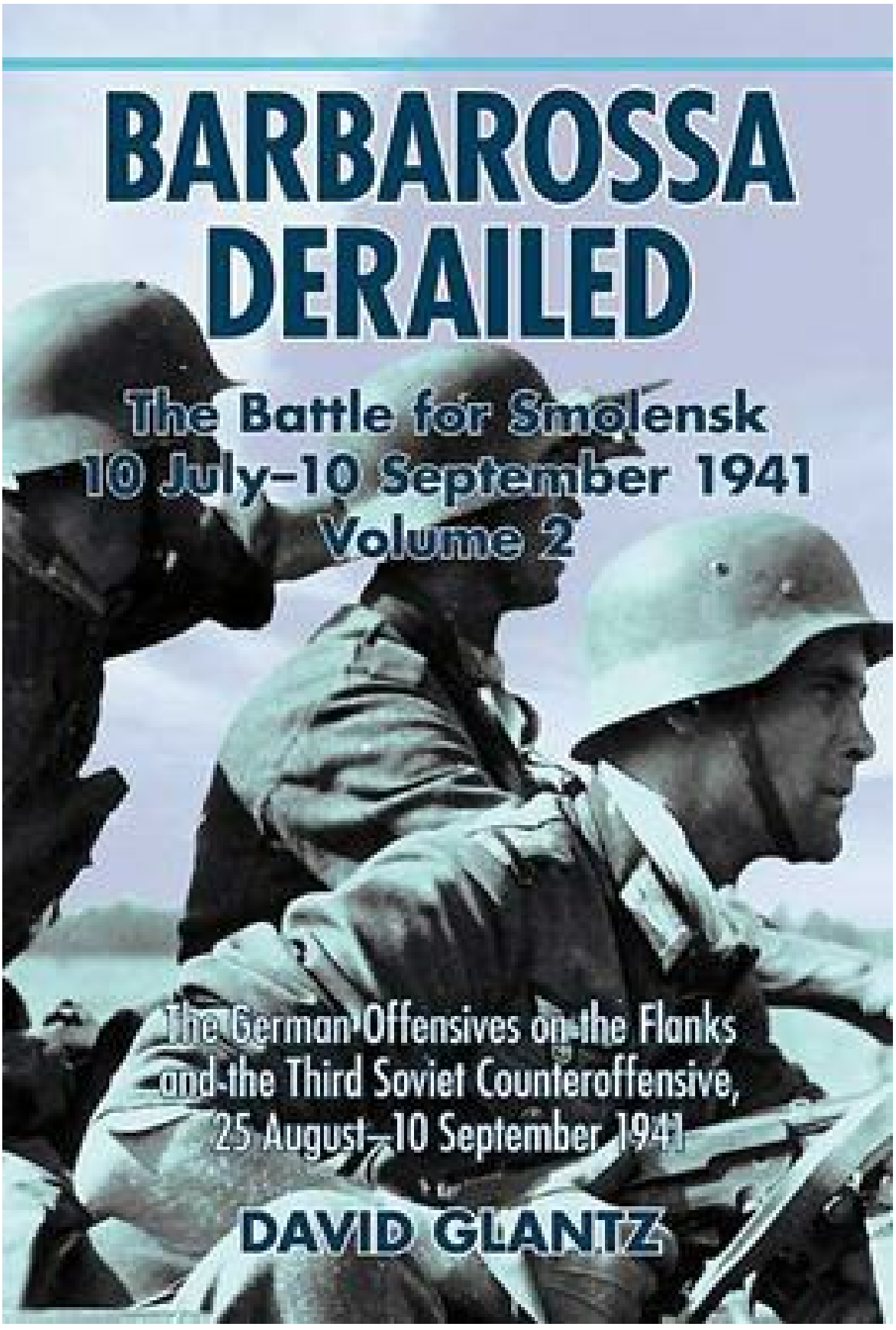
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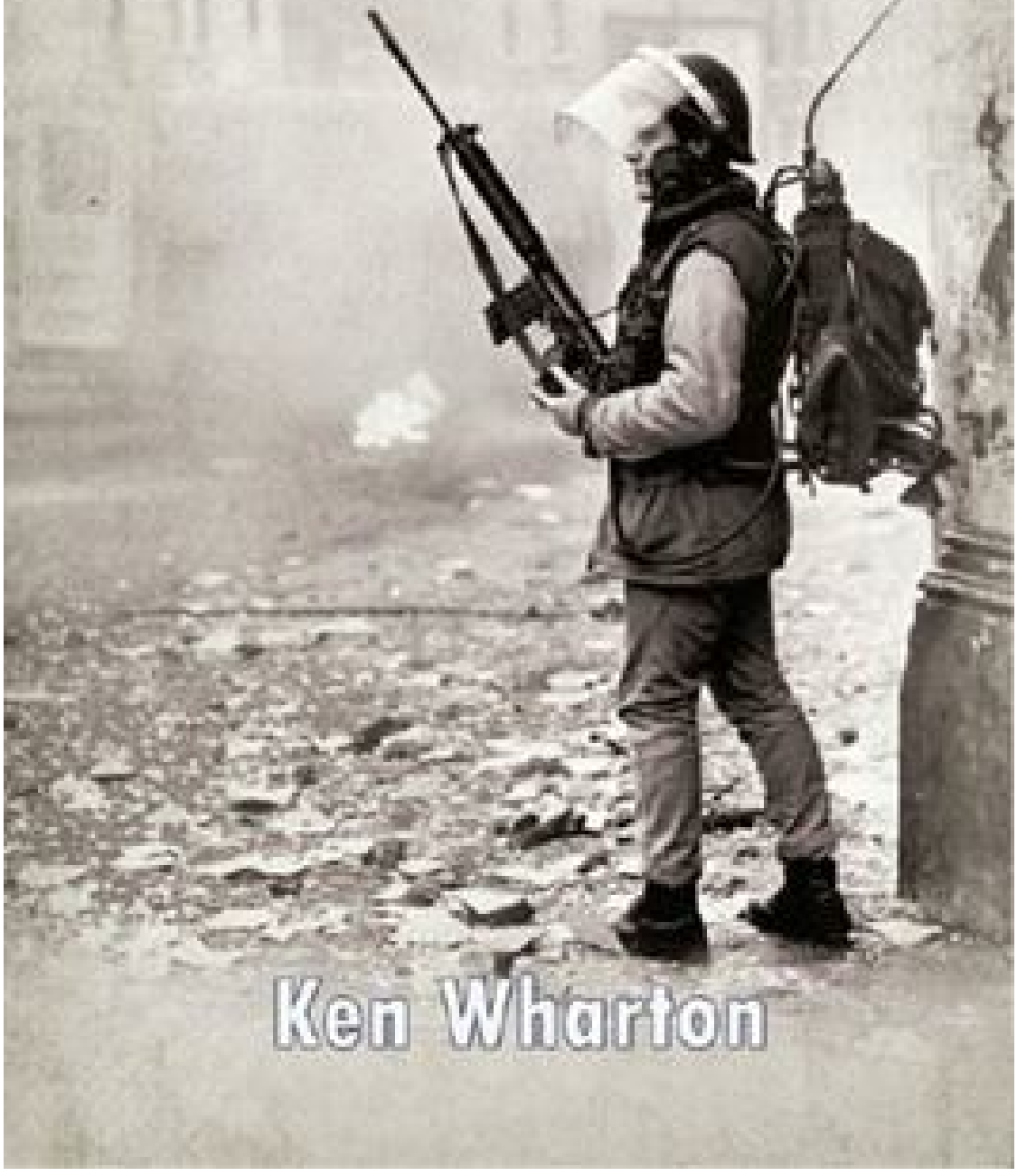

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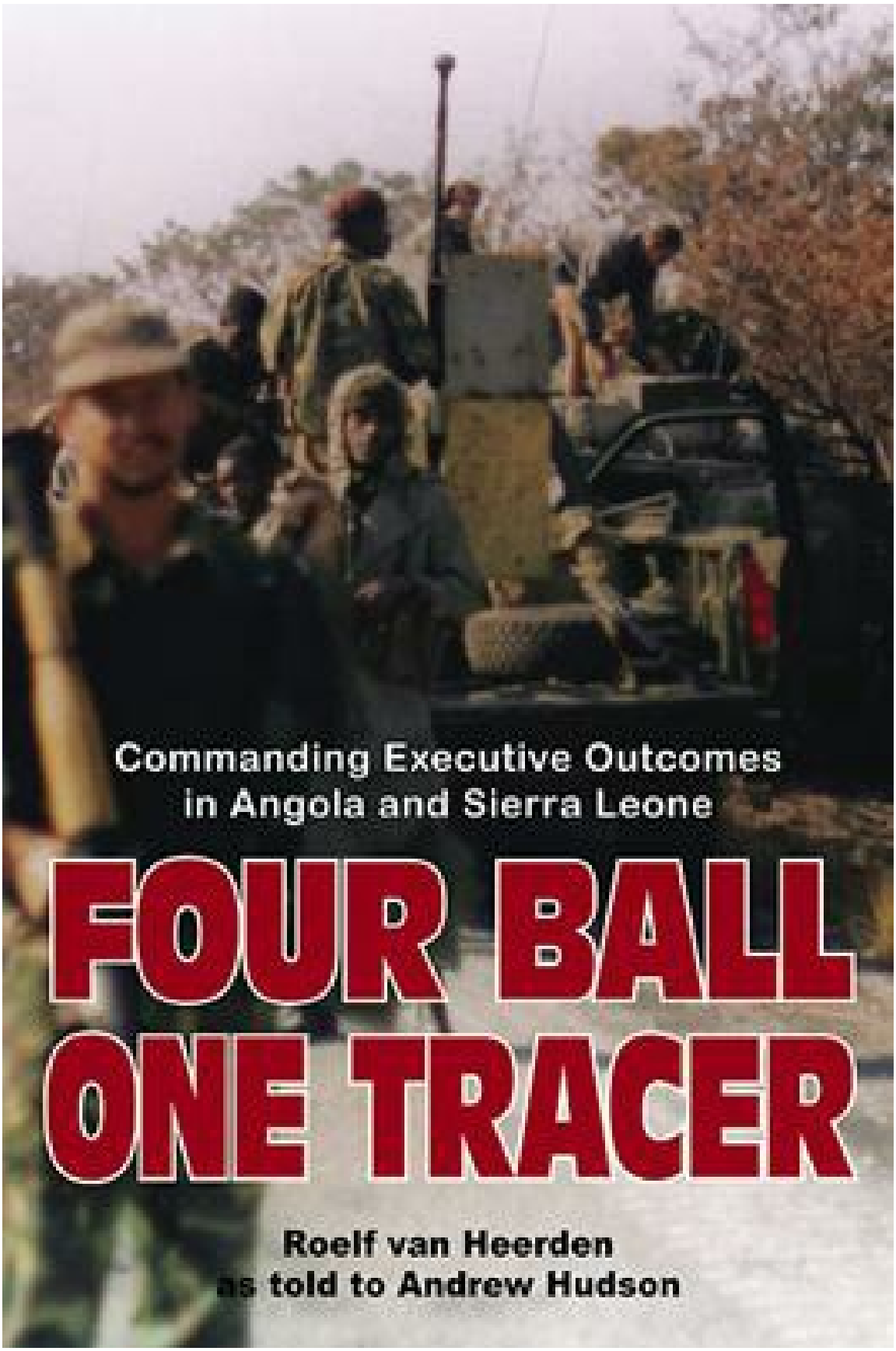
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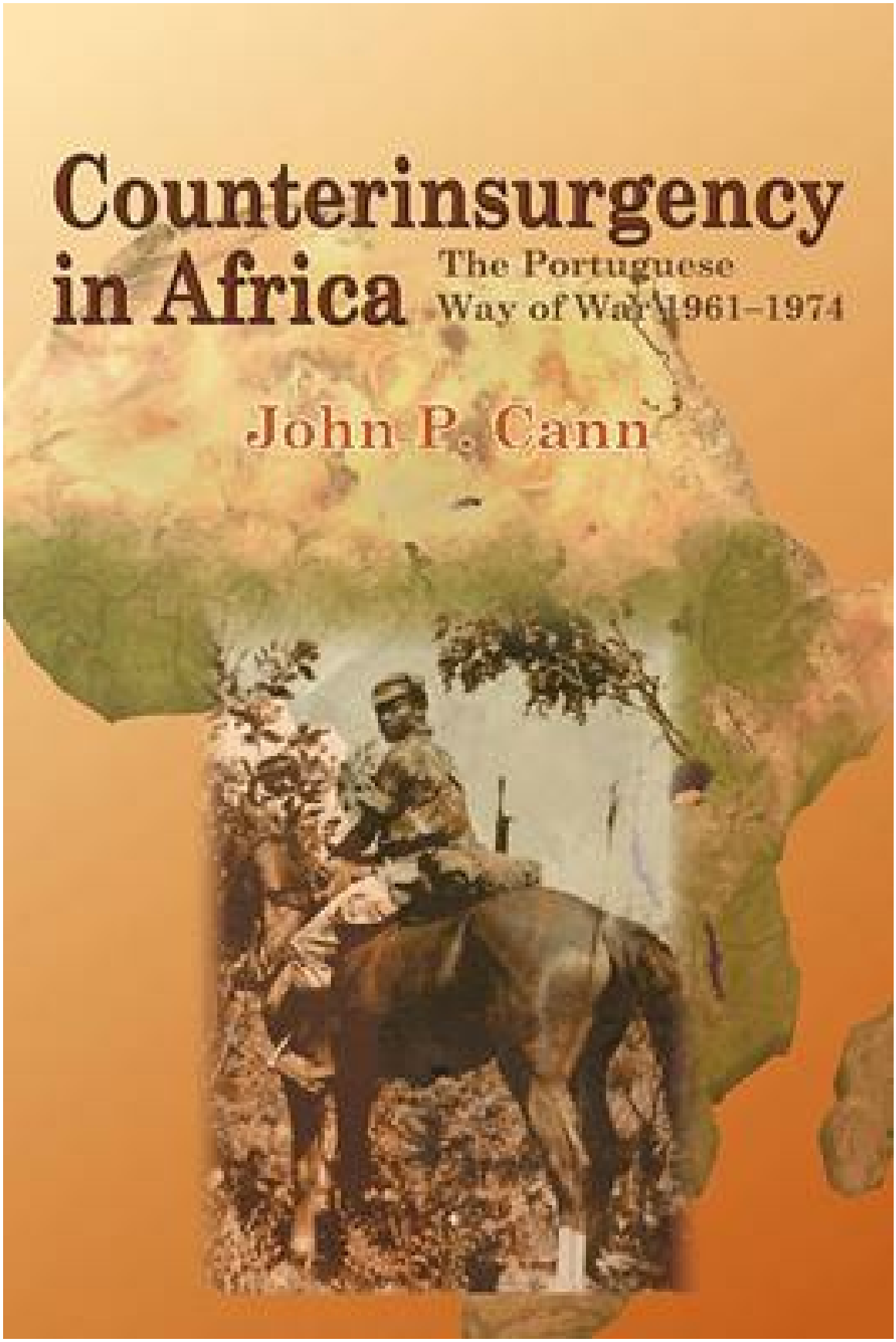

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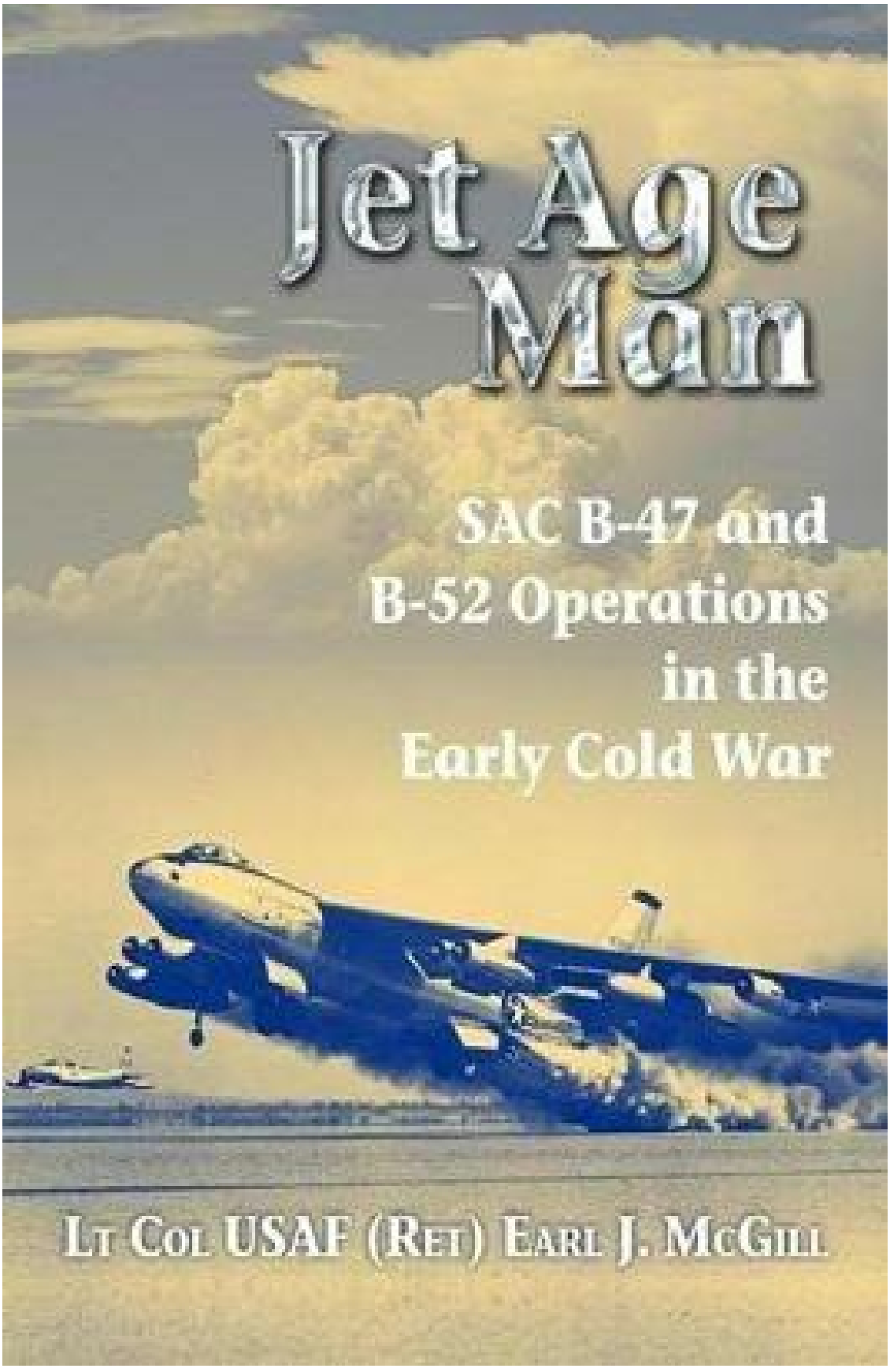
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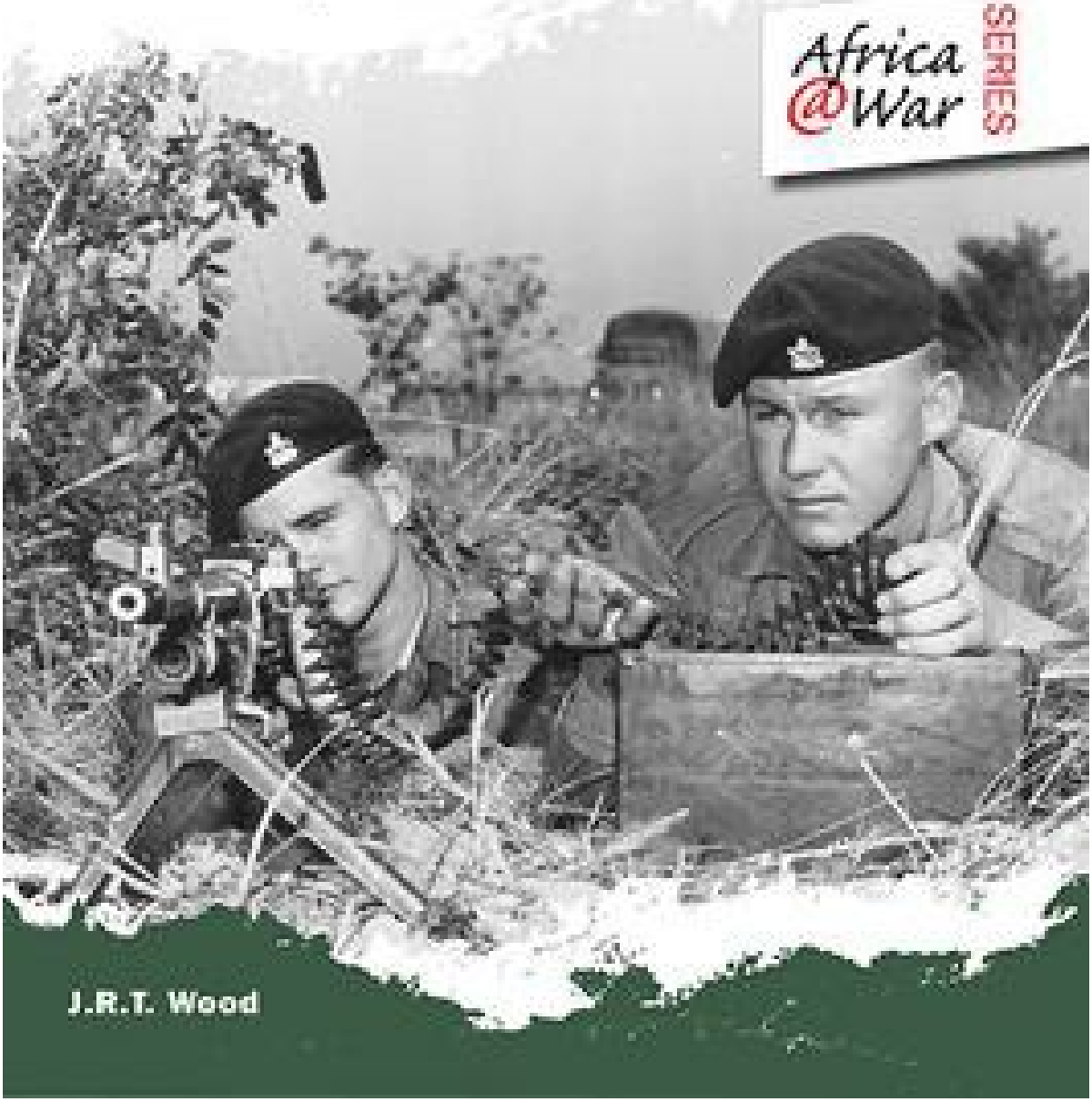

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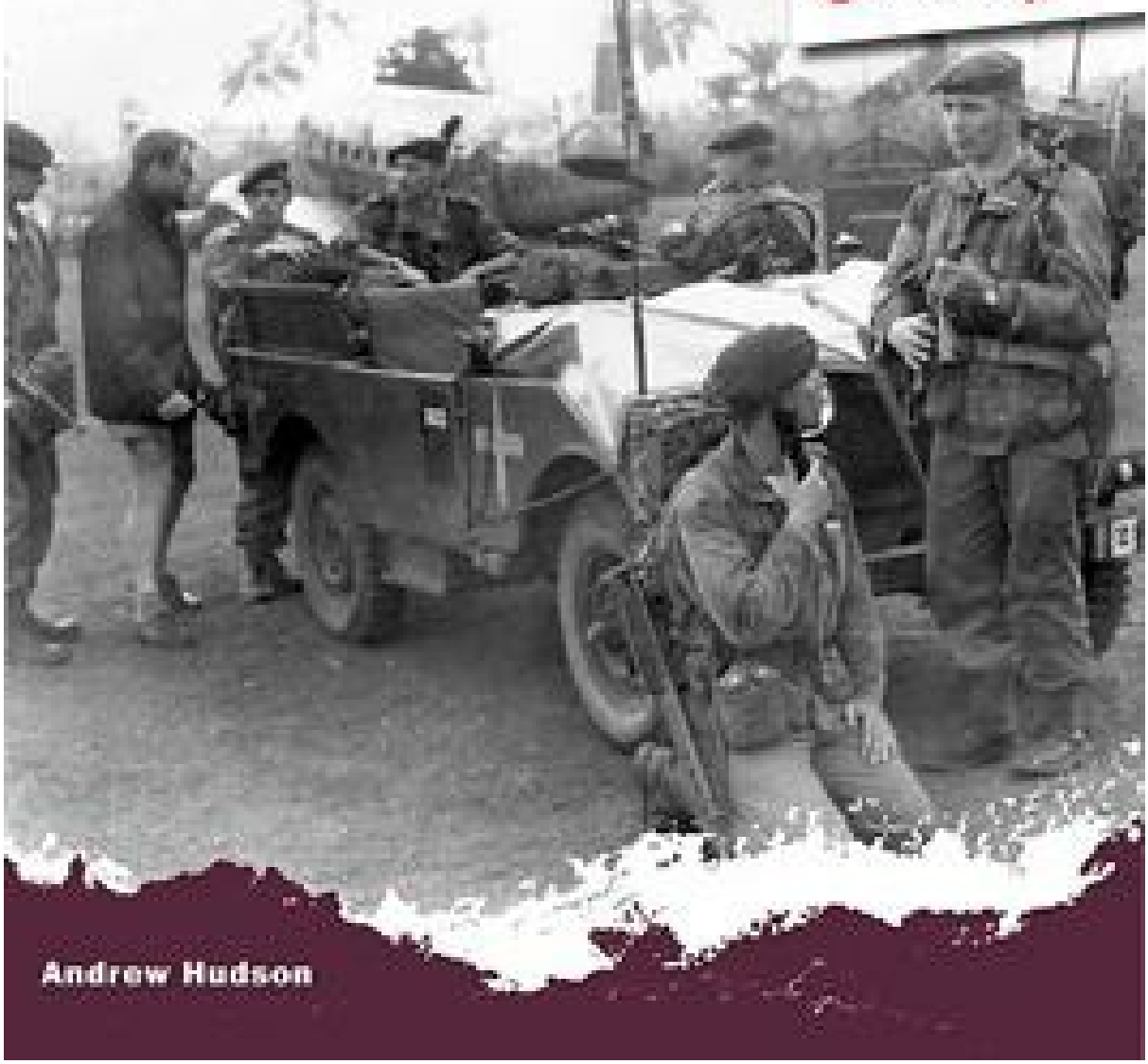

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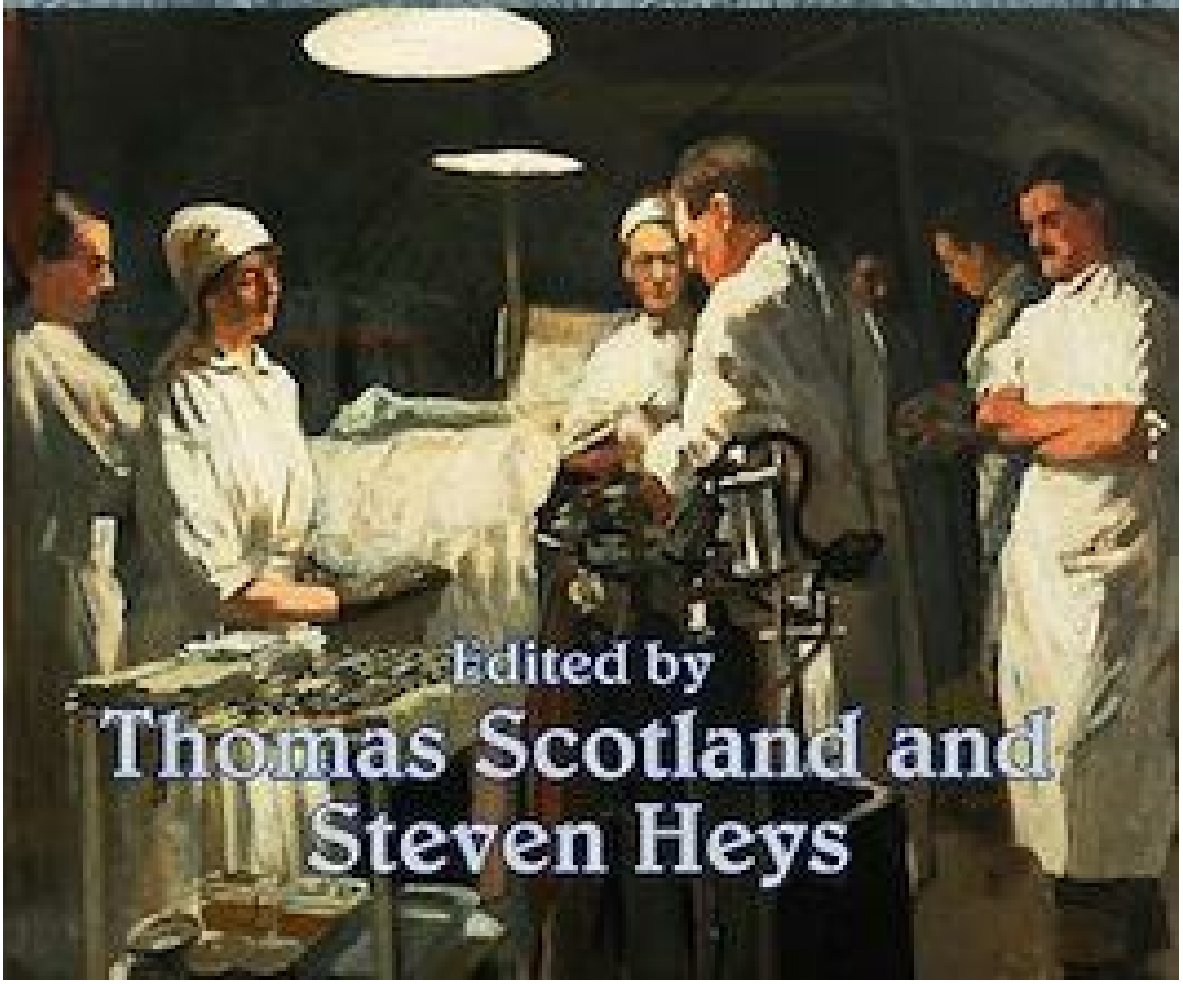

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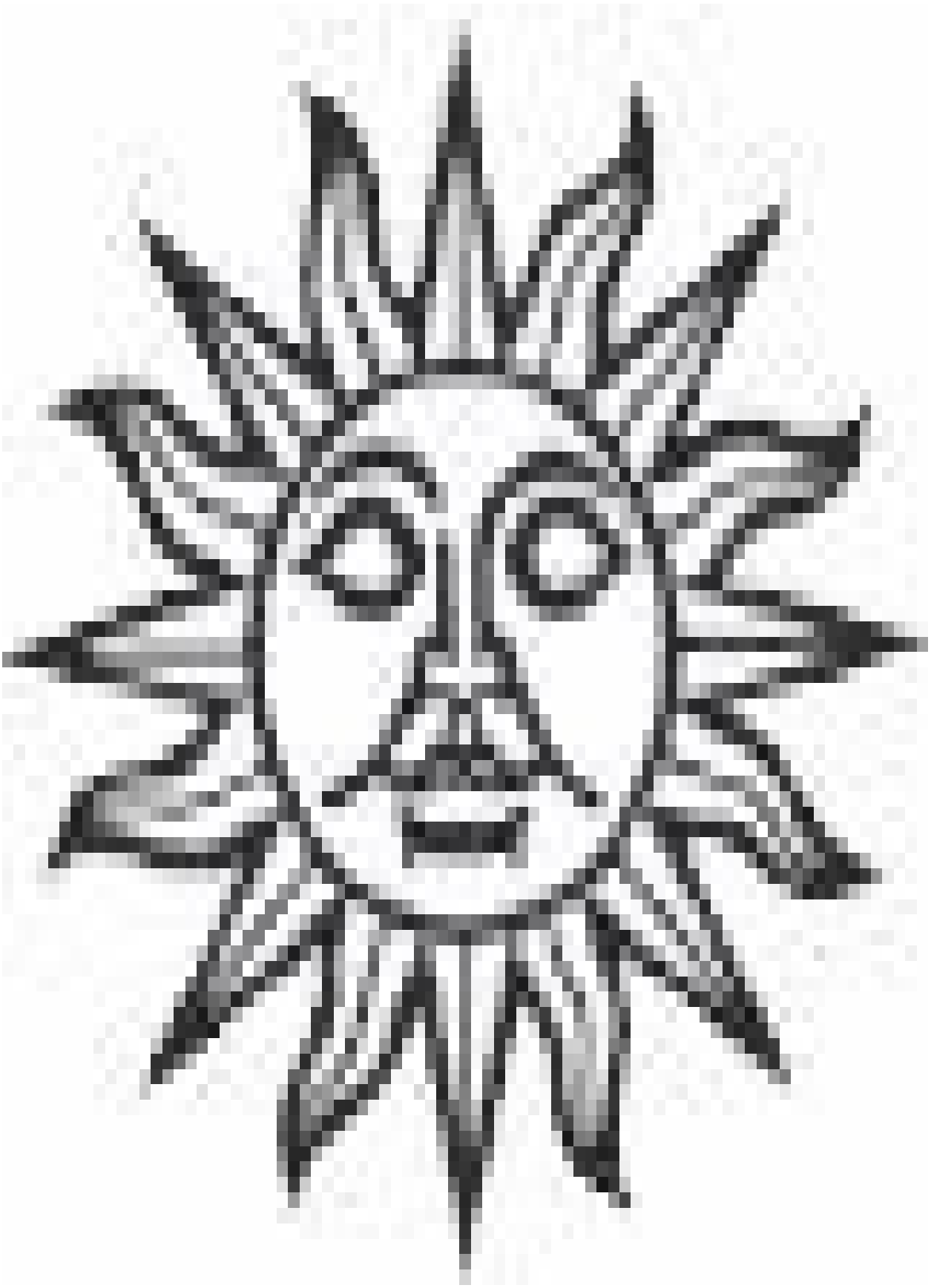

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